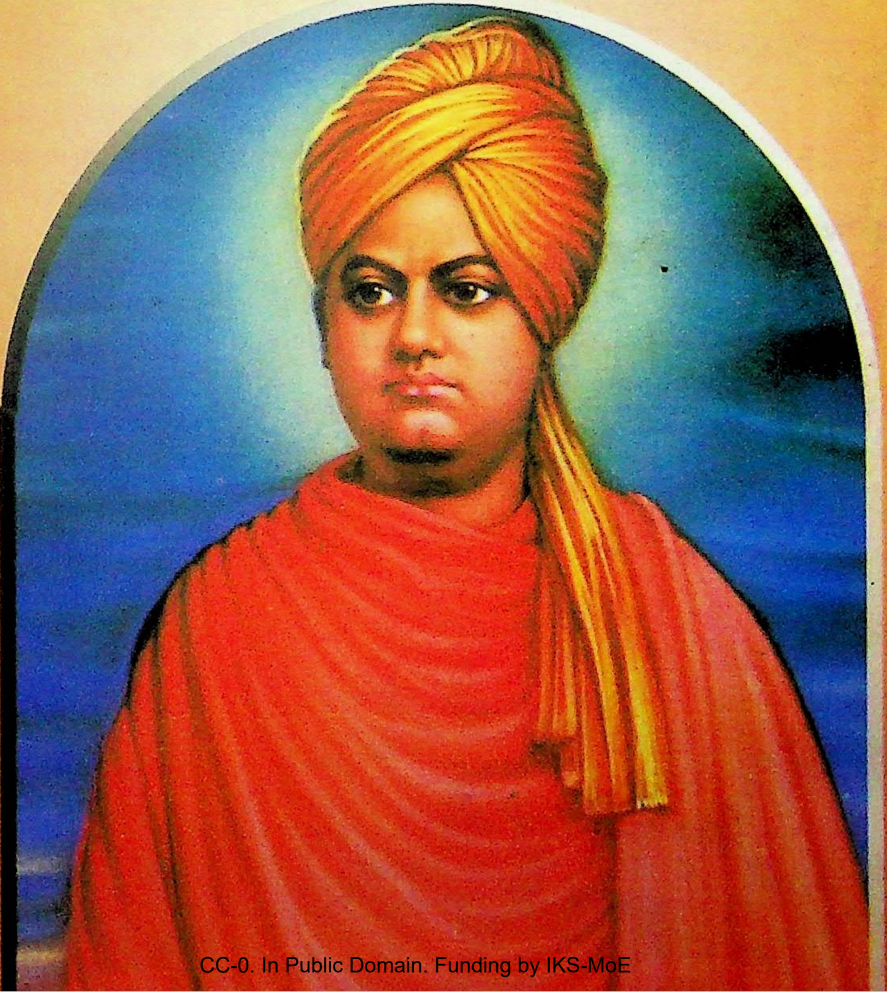
CP

Swami Vivekananda

VIBRANT HUMANIST

Mohit Chakrabarti



Humanism today, we are afraid, is on the wane. The relation between man and man, and, for that end-in-view, man and the world as it ought to be is far beyond satisfactory. The nagging ukase in humanism nursed in passivity, cowardice, egoism, ignorance and apathy has already greeted much mischief to be rampantly afoot and has exceedingly brought man down to the abyss of inhuman insensibility.

A vibrant humanist par excellence, Swàmi Vivekananda harmonizes humanism with the living realities and constraints of life, and spells out the finer essence of humanism by upholding the eternal spirit of man—Tat Tamhosi. He accentuates the essential components of humanism, which pave newer and more thrilling avenues of the ascent and excellence of man in terms of society, education, aesthetics, religion, spirituality, mysticism and peace.

A unique study on the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda's vibrant humanism.

CONTENTS

- The Essence of Humanism: Vivekananda's Viewpoint
- Humanism and Education: Vivekananda's Perspectives
- Humanism and Society: Vivekananda's Guidelines
- Humanism and Religion: Vivekananda's Breakthroughs
- Humanism and Aesthetics: Vivekananda's Beckonings
- Humanism and Mysticism: Vivekananda's Introspection
- Humanism and Spiritualism: Vivekananda's Efflorescence
- Humanism and Peace: Vivekananda's Vision
- Towards a New Image of Man: Vivekananda's Explorations
- Post-Thoughts
- Index

P. 17

14747

Cat-No - 121215.

DLS.
2021.

Pg - 54
B - 2673

Swami Vivekananda
Vibrant Humanist

••स्कैन्ड/ Scanned••

14747

Swami Vivekananda

Vibrant Humanist

MOHIT CHAKRABARTI

स्कैन्ड/ Scanned

KANISHKA PUBLISHERS, DISTRIBUTORS
NEW DELHI-110 002

KANISHKA PUBLISHERS, DISTRIBUTORS
4697/5-21A, Ansari Road, Daryaganj
New Delhi-110 002.
Phones : 327 0497, 328 8285
Fax : 011-328 8285

922.945
C14S

First Published 2001

© Author

ISBN 81-7391-420-6

DISTR· ·RARY
Acc 14747
Cost 300/=
Date 9/6/2002

S.V
7/4/08

PRINTED IN INDIA

Published by Madan Sachdeva for Kanishka Publishers, Distributors, 4697/5-21A, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110 002; Typeset by Arora Computer Point, Delhi, and Printed at Nice Printing Press, Delhi.

Dedicated to

Pranati Chakrabarti, my wife

Sobdo Chakrabarti, my son

with gratitude, best wishes and love

Preface

To be as one ought to be is the genesis of humanism. Swami Vivekananda goes a step farther in the efflorescence of humanism. He makes intensive inroads to one's being in the celebration of consciousness, which prompts and enables one to march ahead towards diverse and thrilling avenues of ascent and excellence. The Garden of Paradise is always in man beckoning to become an eternal wayfarer to beauty and goodness, humility and righteousness, simplicity and fullness.

The cathedral of humanism as Vivekananda vibrantly presents, is a symbol of the ardent promise and poignance of man-the promise and poignance of *Tat Tamhosi*, Thou art That, and the Swayambhu, the All Beautiful effulged in oneself, which is the most prized identity of man. To make this cathedral an ever sacred and serene altar in humankind is all that we are all the time in quest of meaningful and practical philosophy of humanism. "The Essence of Humanism: Vivekananda's Viewpoints" is concerned with this quest.

That the society in which we live and share our thoughts and actions, needs an out and out overhauling in terms of love, sympathy, service, fellow-feeling, tolerance and many other invaluable components contributing to worthwhile humanism is discussed at length in "Humanism and Society: Vivekananda's Guidelines".

The true and living vision of humanism always banks upon education of the right kind and that of the right mind. In "Humanism and Education: Vivekananda's Perspectives" this important dimension of education has been analysed with a critical approach to what Vivekananda actually envisions humanism in and through the apposite role of education.

Religion, more often than not, is an appalling ukase and abstraction. Bereft of its essential and ardent fusion with the appropriate spirit of humanism, it hardly responds to the head and the heart, the mind and the soul, and, above all, to the beckoning of the good and the beautiful. The essence of humanism that is actually the essence of true religion can never be apart from man. The destiny of man looks forward to that humanism which calls forth and caresses to cultivate the religion of the all-round welfare of every human being. "Humanism and Religion: Vivekananda's Breakthroughs" deals with this altruistic spirit of humanism from an altogether newer and more thrilling perspective of practical religion.

"Humanism and Aesthetics: Vivekananda's Beckonings" is an in-depth analysis of how Swami Vivekananda serenely delineates with role of aesthetics in humanism.

Humanism cannot but be nurtured with the finer components of mysticism. "Humanism and Mysticism: Vivekananda's Introspection" is a modest endeavour to identify, analyse and evaluate the essentials of humanism as Vivekananda advocates with special reference to the mystic beyonding of man.

"Humanism and Spiritualism: Vivekananda's efflorescence" is an intensive study of how Vivekananda continually makes us aware of the importance of the cultivation of humanism that amply contributes to the advancement of inner excellence and divine ascent of man.

"Humanism and Peace: Vivekananda's Vision" and "Towards a New Image of Man: Vivekananda's Explorations" might provide the esteemed readers with promises afresh for understanding and appreciating Swami Vivekananda's vibrant humanism.

I cannot but recall and be indebted to the unending spirit of enthusiasm and service I have received from Pranati Chakrabarti and Sobdo Chakrabarti who have spared no pains in assisting me a lot in the preparation of my manuscript. I dedicate my book to them as a token of my gratitude, best wishes and love.

If the book sincerely appeals to each and every revered reader interested in Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of humanism, I would certainly assert aside: what a prize!

MOHIT CHAKRABARTI
Seemantika
Seemanto Palli
Santiniketan-731235
INDIA

Contents

Preface vii

1 The Essence of Humanism: Vivekananda's Viewpoints 1

2 Humanism and Education: Vivekananda's Perspectives 18

3 Humanism and Society: Vivekananda's Guidelines 29

4 Humanism and Religion: Vivekananda's Breakthroughs 44

5 Humanism and Aesthetics: Vivekananda's Beckonings 57

6 Humanism and Mysticism: Vivekananda's Introspection 76

7 Humanism and Spiritualism: Vivekananda's Efflorescence 87

8 Humanism and Peace: Vivekananda's Vision 99

9 Towards a New Image of Man: Vivekananda's Explorations 105

10 Post-Thoughts 112

Index 115

1

The Essence of Humanism: Vivekananda's Viewpoints

Unlike any other humanist, Swami Vivekananda brought about a new vision of humanism—vibrant, thrilling, and spontaneous. He cares for the essence of humanism, which allows everyone to unfold the inherent divinity and expose with all care and caution the finer elements of life. His vision of humanism encompasses society and education, religion and aesthetics, spiritualism and mysticism in all superiority and excellence, ascent and poignance. This is not all. His humanism is, in fact a pointer to permanent peace and harmony amongst all sections of people—the poor and the rich, the high and the low, the socially neglected or revered, the advantaged and the disadvantaged.

Admittedly, Swami Vivekananda upholds humanism for the sake of a new image of man truly baptised in the spirit of oneness well backed by the aesthetic spirit of truth, beauty and goodness. What prompts him to be an unparalleled and incomparable connoisseur of humanism is to find out and establish the greatest and the most desirable qualities of every man to be men and *vice-versa* in order to be justified to the inherent divinity in everyone. For this, he sincerely desires that everyone should strive hard to manifest as best as possible all his promises and prospects for which he is indebted to the society and prior to it to himself as well. Tracing categorically to soul, God and religion in the most intrinsic, distinct and relevant pattern of humanism, he earnestly endeavours to justify the vision of man as the worthiest representative of the All Serene. In this context, he prefers to stabilise humanism in terms of the three components, namely—soul, God and religion as a synchronised pattern of human advancement. He also prefers to visualise that human advancement not merely theoretically but actually in the day-to-day actual affairs of life. Therefore, what we normally mean by soul or God or religion crosses the horizon of human consciousness and reality so much so that the concept of soul or that of God or religion becomes narrow and more often than not, ambiguous. In fact, the concept of soul remains far away from practical humanism and becomes a matter of other worldliness that has nothing to do with human goodness. Again, when we talk about God, we hardly care for the God in every one and live in a world of weirdness where the concept of God is one of dissociation with man and for that end-in-view, humanism. Religion, too, unusually fights shy of humanism as Vivekananda envisions from the inmost core of his heart and catholicity of contemplation. His religion is, indeed, the religion of man—dutiful, divine and divergent in embracing all as the representatives of the All Serene. His religion, again, is the religion of the best efflorescence of man who is always devoted to excellence and ascent in all directions.

Swami Vivekananda is concerned about the essence of humanism not merely because the essence is essential for the time being but for all time to come to explore and reveal unendingly the newer image of man. His own experiments on humanism prove this point. A lone Sanyasi—"A Hindu monk of India"—advances the poignance of humanism in terms of Hinduism that crosses the narrow boundaries of religion of a particular community, sect or society and merges into a religion of all religions promoting and perpetuating evolution of human consciousness. He cares for religion, call it Hinduism or anything and branding him as a Hindu monk of India or otherwise, not as religion but as religions in an assorted form where all religions congregate and proclaim in one voice the glory of man eternally. He cares for that religion which is to be found in full practice amongst all people in the society where it stands for work, work and work alone to elevate continually and in the best pattern possible that work as a divine service.

The quest for dynamic humanism as Swami Vivekananda always inspires and suggests, is a quest for service to man and society which is never different from the quest for the All Serene—*Naranarayana*. This spirit of humanism always fosters the spirit of divinity in all possible avenues of excellence. Vivekananda prefers to make an adventure of humanism in the very social set-up where ignorance is hardly considered to be a constraint of divine efflorescence. To visualise God as God in the society is to visualise Him in the true perspective of divinity and bearing in mind this very truth of humanism, one should shoulder responsibilities of the best upbringing of everyone in the society in order to be His real representative. This also clarifies the fact that humanism starts with conceptualisation of the vision of God within oneself concurrently with one's vision manifested in the society.

Vivekananda prioritises education as the most important and crucial vehicle of efflorescence of humanism. He has some categorical suggestions with regard to education as a very powerful exponent of training and exercise of the human mind. Born with unending possibilities and an incomparable power to contribute profusely to the cause of advancement, divine as well as unique, man experiences the spirit of humanism by means of cultivation of mind from diverse dimensions. Education, therefore, is the focal point of humanism where the strivings for perfection by any one, any time and anywhere are actually the strivings for unfolding the vision of the All Serene.

Education is also a pointer to what one should be as a partner to global progress and global humanism. Swami

Vivekananda advocates for that education which sincerely regards and highlights humanism for manifestation of inward excellence always awaiting appropriate efflorescence. For such kind of education religion is always a part and parcel of one's endeavour to be, as one ought to be. Vivekananda advances a step further in identifying, analysing and evaluating education as an indispensable part of practical humanism where it becomes an absolute and harmonious manifestation of religion. In fact, he does not want to make any difference between education and religion from the standpoint of humanism. That education is religion and humanism is a new dimension of his humanistic viewpoint of religion and man is yet to be translated in reality either in the sphere of education or in that of religion.

Vivekananda makes humanism more sophisticated because his viewpoints on religion are changing the mind of man. How can such a change most satisfactorily take place in the mind of man? The suggestion in the form of a positive answer that he gives may be ardently attended to by everybody even today. As he poignantly elucidates:

> If the study [improvement?] of things in this world is possible, it is not by competition; it is by regulating the mind. Western people say, "That is our nature; we cannot help it." Studying your social problems, [I conclude] you cannot solve them either. In some things you are worse off than we are, . . . and all these things do not bring the world anywhere at all . . . .
>
> The strong take everything; the week goes to the wall. The poor are waiting . . . . The man who can take, will take everything. The poor hate that man. Why? Because they are waiting their turn. All the systems they invent, they all teach the same thing. The problem can only be solved in the mind of man . . . . No law will ever make him do what he does not want to do . . . . It is only if [man] wills to be good that he will be good. All the law and juries . . . cannot make him good. The almighty man

> says, "I do not care". . . . The only solution is if we all want to be good. How can that be done?
>
> All knowledge is within [the] mind. Who saw knowledge in the stone or astronomy in the star? It is all in the human being.
>
> Let us realise [that] we are the infinite power. Who put a limit to the power of mind? Let us realise we are all mind. Every drop has the whole of the ocean in it. That is the mind of man.
>
> —Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, 1989, Vol. I, p. 509.

Action of man. As a sincere protagonist of humanism he emphasizes on divinity as the hallmark of individuality where an individual must have the capacity for mastery over his own thoughts and obviously over his own mind. Then and then alone humanism finds its living and dynamic manifestation in humankind. In the words of Swami Vivekananda:

> The very foundation of society, the formation of it, makes the defect. [Perfection] is only possible if the mind of man is changed, if he, of his own sweet will, changes his mind; and the great difficulty is, neither can he force his own mind
>
> You may not believe in all the claims of this Raja-Yoga. It is absolutely necessary that every individual can become divine. This is only [possible] when every individual has absolute mastery over his own thoughts. . . . [The thoughts, the senses] should be all my servants, not my masters. Then only is it possible that evils will vanish . . . .
>
> Education is not filling the mind with a lot of facts. Perfecting the instrument and getting complete mastery of my own mind [is the ideal of education].
>
> —*Ibid.*, p. 510.

The conquest of mind as Vivekananda envisions in his concept of humanism is actually the conquest of the self in and through emancipation of best thoughts, best ideas, best endeavour and best devotion. He also advances humanism towards a state of beyonding of consciousness whereby one's own self merges in the voidless void. This is what he means by *swayambhu*—the vision of the Divine Being in one's own being.

When Vivekananda speaks of *Tat Tamhosi* or *Thou art that Divine which Thou ought to be,* he actually thinks of man the Divine Being who glorifies humanism in the spirit of best efflorescence and ascent. A mystic vision of humanism as he serenely portrays in his theory and practice of work as worship points to the fact that he never cares for sham humanism or humanism of apparent contentment or happiness but humanism of the highest order. It embraces the finer components of mysticism is always his end-in-view of fullness of man. All devotion, all dedication, all acts of worship and purification that any individual strives for must as he proves in practice undergo a disciplined approach to self-study and self-advancement towards fullness and beyond that. His vision of the voidless void is actually the vision of humanism crystallised in the beyonding of the self. Such an endeavour deserves one's sustained endeavour for emancipation in every direction to justify the vision of man par excellence.

Vivekananda gives ample stress on humanism, which is always synchronised with spiurituality. How does he visualise humanism in the light of spirituality? What are the essential components of spirituality that best define the nature and nurture of humanism? Vivekananda makes a two-fold approach, the first one being that of education of the best order and the second one, society of the highest order, whereby humanism at any point is well guarded and richly flourished.

A mystico-spiritual approach to humanism as Vivekananda advocates in the philosophy of and experimentations on humanism adds a new dimension to the role of man for spirituality manifested in life and work. He himself is quite aware of the fact that whatever self-purification one wants to achieve through exercise of spirituality inherent in oneself always demands the role of one's mystic endeavour where the sense of beyonding of consciousness acts like a perennial beckoning of fullness prominently revealed in his vision of humanism when he expresses his serene reaction on the anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence in poetic cadence:

> Behold, the dark clouds melt away,
> That gathered thick at night, and hung
> So like a gloomy pall above the earth!
> Before thy magic touch, the world
> Awakes.

—*Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 140.

Vivekananda extends the spirit of humanism in mystic aroma simply because he wants to dispel all misgivings and doubts in connection with the vision of mysticism well crystallized in humanism and *vice-versa.* His course of action and contemplation is so inter-twined with the spirit of humanism that in spite of being a mystic visionary, he treads the path of spirituality quite unassumingly and with a certain sense of awareness for inward ascent.

Vivekananda introspects on humanism in the light of global peace and allround well-being of mankind:

> *Sarve sukhi noh bhavantu sarve santu niramayah.*

This, again, is accentuated by the great Upanishadic saying:

> Ah noh bhadra kratava yantu visvatah.

This is the crux of humanism as Vivekananda envisions in terms of altruism. Humanism thus nursled and emboldened also nursles and encourages peace amongst all irrespective of apparent differences whatsoever or howsoever. Peace, according to Vivekananda, is a matter of living faith in humanism. That no two persons or things are different in essence of excellence with the back-drop of a certain stability of consciousness for the inherent indomitable force divine and serene is a new philosophy of humanism which is yet to be adhered to by the distressed humanity. The appalling weakness of humanism par se is not humanism as such but that of a weaker force always tarnishing the image of every human being who identifies humanism in a narrow sense and does not allow it to be an active force promoting peace and prosperity of humankind. Vivekananda also extends the spirit of humanism as a prominent one for advancement of peace in exploring and extending inwardness of vision in the void which again gets a finer platform of ascent and beyonding in the voidless void-samadhi as he would like to identify. This he explains very characteristically in the role of love in relation to human faith and reason:

> When love comes method dies.
> Human language and human forms
> God as father, God as mother,
> God as the lover—Surata—vardhanam etc.
> Solomon's Song of Songs—Dependence and independence
> Love Love—
>
> Love the chaste wife—Anasuya Sita—
> not as hard dry duty but as ever pleasing
> love—Sita worship—
>
> The madness of Love—God intoxicated man
> The allegory Radha—misunderstood
> The restriction more increased—
> Lust is the death of love
> Self is the death of love
> individual to general
> Concrete to abstract—to absolute
> The praying Mohammedan and the girl
> The Sympathy—Kabir—
> The Christian nun from whose hand blood came
> The Mohammedan Saint
> Every particle seeking its own complement
> When finds that it is at rest
> Every man seeking—happiness & stability
> The search is real but the objects are themselves
> but happiness is coming to them momentary at least
> through of these objects
>
> —*Ibid., 'Reason, Faith and Love'*, p. 426.

Swami Vivekananda makes an introspective inquiry into the world of work and worship and directs our attention to how the two are well synchronized for poignance and efflorescence of humanism. In this respect he cares more for one's involvement in work than in so-called worship that eliminates man from inward divinity. In answering the role of man in exercising the true form of religion in every sect or society he very poignantly asserts by drawing our attention to our age-old tradition and devotion to religion of man that cares for every sect or society:

> The king Piyadasi, beloved of the gods, honours all sects, both ascetics and householders; he propitiates them by alms and other gifts, but he attaches less importance to gifts and honours than to the endeavour to promote the essential moral values. It is true the prevalence of essential virtues differs In different sects, but there is a common basis. That is, gentleness, moderation in language and morality. Thus one should not exalt one's own sect and decry others, but tender them on every occasion the honour they deserve. Striving thus, one promotes the welfare of his own sect, while serving the others. Striving otherwise, one does not serve his own sect while disserving others; and whosoever, from attachment to his own sect and with a view to promoting it, decries others, only deals rude blows to his own sect. Hence concord alone is meritorious, so that all bear and love to bear the beliefs of each other. It is with this purpose that this edict has been inscribed; that all people, whatever their faith may be, should be encouraged to promote the essential moral doctrines in each and mutual respects for all the other sects. It is with this object that the ministers of religion, the inspectors and other bodies of officers should all work.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 288.

To Vivekananda, religion itself is humanism and for this reason he places religion not in the altar of a temple or a church or a mosque or to any other place of divine service, but straight to the heart of the society where humans are there associated with diverse activities. Religion therefore is to be sought in the society where every man and woman irrespective of status or position is to be given the glory of God. Then and then only the true spirit of humanism as Vivekananda reminds us again and again, can be understood in the right order of excellence. In a letter written to Swami Akhandananda, he stirringly advises:

> Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes of the town of Khetri and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral lessons on Geography and such other subjects. No good will come of sitting idle and having princely dishes, and saying "Ramakrishna, O Lord!"—unless you can do some good to the poor. Go to other villages from time to time, and teach people the art of life as well as religion. Work, worship and Jnana (Knowledge)—first work, and your mind will be purified; otherwise everything will be fruitless like pouring oblations on a pile of ashes instead of the sacred fire. . . . It is preferable to live on grass for the sake of doing good to others. The Gerua robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work. You must give your body, mind, and speech to "the welfare of the world". You have read "Matridevo Bhava Pitridevo bhava"—Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God—but I say "daridradevo bhava, murkhodevo bhava" (The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God). Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 288.

Like a radical humanist, Vivekananda identifies and analyses humanism from very realistic points of view. He welcomes diversities in thoughts and opinions, ideas and approaches to different subjects so that the process of thinking on the part of any individual enjoys interrupted freedom. This is what humanity deserves from a thinking human being. Drawing our attention to the importance of being always in the process of thinking for crystallization and re-crystallization of different ideas and opinions that one comes across in course of interactions among different sects upholding different religions, Vivekananda appreciates straightforward and courageous endeavour to highlight one's opinion and free process of thought as follows:

> When religions are dead, there will be no more sects; it will be the perfect peace and harmony of the grave. But so long as mankind thinks, there will be sects. Variation is the sign of life, and it must be there. I pray that may multiply so that at last there will be as many sects as human beings, and each one will have his own method, his individual method of thought in religion.
>
> But this thing exists already. Each one of us is thinking in his own way, but his natural course has been obstructed all the time and is still being obstructed. If the sword is not used directly, other means will be used. Just hear what one of the best preachers in New York says: he preaches that the Filipinos should be conquered because that is the only way to teach Christianity to them! They are already Catholics; but he wants to make them Presbyterians, and for this, he is already to lay all these terrible scene of bloodshed upon his race. How terrible! And this man is one of the greatest preachers of this country, one of the best informed men. Think of the state of the world when a man like that is not ashamed to stand up and utter such arrant nonsense; and think of the state of the world when an audience cheers him! Is this civilisation? It is the old blood-thirstiness of the tiger, the cannibal, the savage, coming out once more under new names, new circumstances. What else can it be? If the state of things is such now think of the horrors through which the world passed in olden times, when every sect was trying by every means in its power to tear to pieces the other sects. History shows that the tiger in us is only asleep; it is not dead. When opportunities come, it jumps up and, as of old, uses its claws and fangs. Apart from

> the sword, apart from material weapons, there are weapons still more terrible—contempt, social hatred, and social ostracism. Now, these are the most terrible of all inflictions that are hurled against persons who do not think exactly in the same way as we do. And why should everybody think just as we do? I do not see any reason. If I am a rational man, I should be glad they do not think just as do. I do not want to live in a grave-like land; I want to be a man in the world of men. Thinking beings must differ; difference is the first sign of thought. If I am a thoughtful man, certainly I ought to like to live amidst thoughtful persons where there are differences of opinion.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 363-65.

Endearing humanity in one's own fashion and thinking in one's own way of life and actions is the *sine qua non* of humanism. Vivekananda re-vitalises that form of humanism, which caters to the nursing of thinking in the best way of one's creative and critical efflorescence of perfection. This he considers to be of great importance to the advancement of civilization. Humanism is what emboldens one to realise the inherent strength with which one is divinely blessed. A coward's approach to life and work is sans humanity, sans individuality, where creativity and critical thinking enjoy unusual, undisturbed slumber. Intellect, too, finds no avenue of manifestation and with these limitations one cannot but betray one's existence in this world. A really sane person with the minimum sense of the spirit of humanism should have the ability to feel that there is an infinite spirit working unconsciously in ourselves. Therefore, by ignoring the fact that there is an infinite spirit within everyone of us always safeguarding ourselves, we take recourse to invite sorrow and misfortune even from little things. This is simply a betrayal of consciousness that shields humanity. How does Vivekananda explain weakness or strength with reference to humanism? How does he differentiate between greatness and littleness or between the high and the low as an existentialist baking his arguments in the warmth of humanism? How, again, does he make us realise that we are infinite beings bearing the torch of humanism? Here are the answers to all these askance as he adroitly elucidates:

> Where is weakness? Who is strong? What is great and what is strong? What is high and what is low in this marvellous inter-dependence of existence where the smallest atom is necessary for the existence of the whole? Who is great and who is small? It is past finding out! And why? Because none is great and none is small. All things are inter-penetrated by that infinite ocean; their reality is that infinite; and whatever there is on the surface is but that infinite. The tree is infinite; so is everything that you will see or feel—every grain of sand, every thought, every soul, everything that exists, is infinite. Infinite is finite and finite infinite. This is our existence.
>
> Now, that may be all true, but all this feeling after the Infinite is at present mostly unconscious. It is not that we have forgotten that infinite nature of ours; none can ever do that. Who can ever think that he can be annihilated? Who can think that he will die? None can. All our relation to the Infinite works in us unconsciously. In a manner, therefore, we forget our real being and hence all this misery comes.
>
> In practical daily life we are hurt by small things; we are enslaved by little beings. Misery comes because we think that we are finite—we are little beings. And yet, how difficult it is to believe that we are infinite beings! In the midst of all these misery and trouble, when a little thing may through me off my balance, it must be my care to believe that I am infinite. And the fact is that we are, and that consciously or unconsciously we are all searching after that something which is infinite; we are always seeking for something that is free.
>
> —*Ibid.*

With all these essentials to humanism, Vivekananda expands the horizon of humanism by changing the very identity of man from the so-called vision of man bereft of the spirit of divinity. He does not allow man to be lost nor does he want man to belittled. His concept of God is also ingrained in the spirit of the Divine Being. As a matter of fact, he always lashes at the idea of God being separated from man and *vice-versa*. Man as man is existent in God and God as God can never be apart from man. The question of God's existence is one of self-existence. It would be a poor show of man if he is separated from his Divine Being. Again, when one speaks of the existence of God in oneself, one admits the fact that God is the Self, that Divine and Ever Serene Self who always highlights the glory of humanism. While advocating God as the Divine Self in man, Vivekananda speaks of the real infinite, not the infinite of space which clings to and guides man from time beyond time whereby the efflorescence of humanism in man finds a characteristic revelation. In his own words,

> It is not the infinite of space but the real Infinite, beyond space, beyond time. . . . Such is the world missed by the Occident. . . . Their minds have been turned to external nature and nature's God. Look within yourself and find the Truth that you had [forgotten]. Is it possible for mind to come out of this dream without the help of the gods? Once you start the action, there is no help unless the merciful Father takes us out.
>
> That would not be freedom, [even] at the hands of the merciful God. Slavery is slavery. The chain of gold is quite as bad as the chain of iron. Is there a way out?
>
> You are not bound. No one was ever bound. [The Self] is beyond. It is the all. You are the One; there are no two. God was your own reflection cast upon the screen of Maya. The real god [is the Self]. He [whom man] ignorantly worships is that reflection. [They say that] the Father in heaven is God. Why God? [It is because He is] your own reflection that [He] is God. Do you see how you are seeing God all the time? As you unfold your self, the reflection grows [clearer].
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 500.

With the mystic vision of man as above, Vivekananda extends the light of vision in the light of beyonding of consciousness. This is not a new one but a matter which clarifies the position of man in terms of worship. He also advances the theory and practice of humanism from an altogether iconoclastic point of view regarding man-God relationship. His vision is quite clear and explicit. He goes deep into the essence of humanism where the spirit of God finds reverence in nursing of work as worship. He also reminds us of the fact that most of the work that man performs is subjective and therefore hardly reveals the spirit of the Divine inherent in him. God thus remains absent in work where worship enjoys holidays. Real worship is God's worship an d for God's worship all work that man does should be directed towards men—far and near who bear the real identity of God. This will be real worship in work and this is what Karma-yoga actually means. Vivekananda makes a very significant analysis in this connection:

> We do not see God or believe in Him. He is G-O-D to us and nothing more. There are moments when we think He is near, but then we fall down again. When you see Him, who struggles for whom? Help the Lord! There is a proverb in our language, "Shall we teach the Architect of the universe how to build?" So those are the highest of mankind who do not work. The next time we see, you see, these silly phrases about the world and how we must all help God and do this or that for Him, remember this. Do not think such thoughts; they are too selfish. All the work you do is subjective, is done for your own benefit. God has not fallen into a ditch for you and me to help Him out by building a hospital or something of that sort. He allows you to work. He allows you to exercise your muscles in this great gymnasium, not in order to help Him but that you may help yourself. Do you think even an ant will die for want of your help? Most arrant blasphemy! The world does not need you at all. The world goes on. You are like a drop in the ocean. A leaf does not move, the wind does

> not blow without Him. Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not of helping Him. Cut out the word "help" from your mind. You cannot help; it is blaspheming. You are here yourself at His pleasure. Do you mean to say, you help Him? You worship. When you give a morsel of food to the dog, you worship the dog as God. God is in that dog. He is the dog. He is all and in all. We are allowed to worship Him. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe and than will come perfect non-attachment. This should be your duty. This is the proper attitude of work.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 245-46.

A total overhauling of work in terms of worship and *vice-versa* for the cause of humanism as Vivekananda highlights above is the most important and significant point of advancement of man. That man is not only the highest and best creation of God is explicitly defined when one identifies oneself in fusion with the latter and at the same time honours and reveres the latter by allowing oneself as a cipher and constant practitioner of the diverse messages and orders of the All Beautiful at any time, anywhere. This is not adulation to the All Beautiful nor is it a revelation of effortlessness on the part of oneself. Rather it is a new awakening, a new beginning, a new look at oneself to start and revitalize one's vision of the All Beautiful in oneself. What is the outcome of one's involvement as such? According to Vivekananda, it is an experience of seeing oneself in the vision of the All Seer. This is not an easy task as it signifies the essence of humanism.

The essence of humanism is, as Vivekananda reminds us, the essence of the self that embraces spiritual life. Such a life unendingly seeks perfection through a series of successes and failures when successes lead to higher aims and nobler visions of humanism while failures assure promises of fullness ahead. How does he place humanism in the spirit of meditation as he prescribes for every human being? Here is the answer:

Live for an ideal, and leave no place in the mind for anything else. Let us put forth all our energies to acquire that which never fails—our spiritual perfection. If we have true yearning realisation, we must struggle, and through struggle growth will come. We shall make mistakes, but they may angels unawares.

The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation *(Dhyana)*. In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation. The touch of the soul can paint the brightest colour even in the dingiest places; it can cast a fragrance over the vilest thing; it can make the wicked divine—and all enmity, all selfishness is effaced. The less the thought of the body, the better. For it is the body that drags us down. It is attachment, identification, which makes us miserable. That is the secret: To think that I am the spirit and not the body, and that the whole of the universe with all its relations, with all its good and all its evils, is but as a series of paintings—scenes on a canvas—of which I am the witness.

—*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 37.

When would we respond to the orphic voice of Swami Vivekananda to be genuine and abiding torchbearers of advancement of humanism?

2

Humanism and Education: Vivekananda's Perspectives

Education has its unending influence in humans. It creates a certain sense of awareness both within and outside extending its range in the beyonding of consciousness. But this does not necessarily mean that it is a process automatic and mechanical. On the other hand, it demands one's continual persuasive and evolutionary process to try to find out and manifest the best within oneself. What is best, again, is best for the time being and this is why the best is to be manifested in betterment.

As an unparalleled exponent of education for continual and persistent betterment of the best, Swami Vivekananda steers our direction towards unending endeavour to unfold ourselves to the best of our abilities well supported by catholicity of vision and poignance of perfection. As a matter education to him is a struggle for expansion. Hence, the importance of education for better understanding and appreciation of humanism.

Bearing in mind the role of education as above, one can easily understand why Swami Vivekananda has given so much importance to education for knowledge that purifies humans and direct them towards going deep into the world of purity and perfection. The ultimate reality of knowledge thus crystallised in education allows the learner to rise above unreality or abstraction which as Vivekananda terms Maya or illusion and embraces everything that eliminates any sense of animality in man. In his concept of human knowledge, his elucidation spells out adroitly how we can humanise knowledge:

> . . . in the ultimate analysis all knowledge evolves itself into this vicious circle: the indeterminate interdependence of cause and effect. Judging by the laws of reasoning, such knowledge is incorrect; and the most curious fact is that this knowledge is proved to be incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws which depend for their basis upon the self-same vicious circle. It is clear, therefore, that the peculiarity of all our knowledge is that it proves its own insufficiency. Again, we cannot say that it is unreal, for all the reality we know and can think of is within this knowledge. Nor can we deny that it is sufficient for all practical purposes. This state of human knowledge which embraces within its scope both the external and the internal worlds is called Maya. It is unreal because it proves its own incorrectness. It is real in the sense of being sufficient for all the needs of the animal man.
>
> Acting in the external world Maya manifests itself as the two powers of attraction and repulsion. In the internal its manifestations are desire and non-desire (*Pravritti* and *Nivritti*). The whole universe is trying to rush outwards. Each atom is trying to fly off from its centre. In the internal world, each thought is trying to go beyond control. Again, each particle in the external world is checked by another force, the centripetal and drawn towards the centre. Similarly, in the thought-world the controlling power is checking all these outgoing desires.[1]

To humanise education in accordance with the controlling power of knowledge that makes a harmonious blending of reality and unreality as Vivekananda characterises above is to find out the right way to fullness of life, which is definitely a successful endeavour on the part of every human being. It is not an easy task, for reality and unreality are always at cross-roads with each other. When he speaks of Maya, he draws our attention to the fact that education has all the liability to ward it off from every thought and action of human being. Knowledge, therefore, must be purified so that neither reality nor unreality is allowed to make a world of ukase.

Vivekananda's philosophy of education for efflorescence of humanism is always based on that reality of human life which is not far away from one's very being in the form of one's becoming in and around the society in which one lives. He always makes us cautious of the fact that by ignoring humans in and around us, we become cornered and limited in our application of what we learnt and grasped by means of education received either in an institution or within ourselves by our own endeavour. Education must come to life as it is before our eyes and within our direct reach of experience and not by an air of unreality often embarrassed by the vision of Maya. It must negotiate all the ills of man and society and make a direct reaction to eliminate those ills by replacing all the good virtues of truth, beauty and goodness. Even a little of education becomes legion in terms of what one does and what one reacts to for the cause of downtrodden humankind ignored and despised by the so-called educated humanity.

Vivekananda never wants to philosophise education in terms of drab and lifeless theories and theories alone. He refers again and again to the futility of education in theories alone which may speak for high-sounding ideas and thoughts, feelings and sensations, emotions and unrealities. Instead, he wants that education should come close to the doors of the poor, the ignored, the uncared and the despised and never remain aloof from the hard realities of life. How to look at everyman from this standpoint of education for practical humanism? Here is Vivekananda's pulsating suggestion:

> Look upon every man, woman and everyone as God. You cannot help anyone, you can only serve: serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help anyone of His children, blessed you are; do not think too much of yourselves. Blessed you are that that privilege was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as a worship. I should see God in the poor, and it is for my salvation that I go and worship them. The poor and the miserable are for our salvation, so that we may serve the Lord, coming in the shape of the diseased, coming in the shape of the lunatic, the leper and the sinner! Bold are my words; and let me repeat that it is the greatest privilege in our life that we are allowed to serve the Lord in all these shapes. Give up the idea that by ruling over others you can do any good to them. But you can do just as much as you can in the case of the plant; you can supply the growing seed with the materials for the making up of its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air, that it wants. It will take all that it wants by its own nature, it will assimilate and grow by its own nature.
>
> Bring all light into the world. Light, bring light! Let light come into everyone; the task will not be finished till everyone has reached the Lord. Bring light to the poor; and bring more light to the rich, for they require it more than the poor. Bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous! Thus bring light to all and leave the rest unto the Lord, for in the words of the same Lord, "To work you have the right and not to the fruits thereof." "Let not your work produce results for you, and at the same time may you never be without work."[2]

To be never without work is to remain on the right track of humanism and to remain on the right track of humanism is to enjoy the rich and prized fruits of education. Vivekananda's practical approach to education for vibrant humanism always heralds the glory of education of the self that prompts man how to rise above the narrow self and work untiringly for the cause of the good of one and all.

To untiringly work for the cause of others is to be christened with the education of inwardness of the self. Such education necessitates the true knowledge of the Self. How to be hallowed with the true knowledge of the Self? How would we enrich ourselves with he invaluable education of oneness that always teaches us how to eliminate little differences amongst ourselves and earnestly prepare everyone of us to encounter the Infinite, Indestructible and Unchangeable? As Vivekananda poignantly suggests:

> We must learn how to turn the eye to see inwards. The eagerness of the eyes to see outwards should be restricted. When you walk in a busy street, it is difficult to hear the man speak with whom you are walking, because of the passing carriages. He cannot hear you because there is so much noise. The mind is going outwards, and you cannot hear the man who is next to you. In the same way, this world around us is making such a noise that it draws the mind outwards. How can we see the Self? This going outwards must be stopped. That is what is meant by turning the eyes inwards, and then alone the glory of the Lord within will be seen . . . .
>
> There cannot be two beings who are infinite, and the result is, there is really only one Self, and you, I, and the universe are but one, appearing as many. "As the one fire entering into the world manifests itself in various ways, even so that one Self, the Self of all, manifests Itself in every form." But the question is: If this Self is perfect and pure, and the One Being of the universe, what becomes of It when It goes into the impure body, the wicked body, the good body, and so on? How can it remain perfect? "The one sun is the cause of vision in every eye, yet it is not touched by the defects in the eyes of any." If a man has prejudice he sees everything as yellow; the cause of his vision is the sun, but his seeing everything as yellow does not touch the sun. Even so this One Being, though he Self of everyone, is not touched

> by the purities or impurities outside. "In this world where everything is evanescent, he who knows Him who never changes, in this world of insentiency, he who knows the one sentient Being, in this world of many, he who knows this One and sees Him in his own soul unto him belongs eternal bliss, to none else, to none else. There the sun shines not, nor the stars, nor the lightening flashes what to speak of fire? He shining, everything shines; through His light everything becomes effulgent. When all the desires that trouble the heart cease, then the mortal becomes immortal, and here one attains Brahman. When all the crookedness of the heart disappears, when all knots are cut asunder, then alone the mortal becomes immortal. This is the way. May this study bless us; may it maintain us; may it give us strength, may it become energy in us; may we not hate each other; peace unto all!"[3]

Making education for the well-being of all and enriching it for the well-being of oneself, is a thrilling task. It encapsulates the sense of humility and self-dedication which has won the greatest blessings of education of humanism. Vivekananda envisions that kind of humanism where education is directed towards the unison of the self and the soul. Such type of education prepares one to enrich the self to be attuned to the Supreme Self wherein lies the Supreme Soul. This is what is called humanised education in the true sense of the term because such kind of education elevates one to visualise the souls of every human being merged in One Soul, One Being, One Divine Soul, One Divine Being.

Education in terms of purified humanity as Vivekananda envisions, does not allow any form of negativism either in cowardice or in passivity. Negative education dwarfs the self and narrows all visions of altruism. On the other hand, positive education, the education of the mind and the heart, well blended and purified for the cause of advancement of humanism allows education to foster the spirit of sympathy and kindness, nobility and blessedness.

Vivekananda's philosophy of education for practical humanism is always based on how to prepare oneself for the cause of doing good to others, and in the process of doing so, how to learn and prepare oneself to forget the self as very often as possible. This is not an easy task as it requires all the time an ardent endeavour to learn and practise how to remain above self and how to love and dedicate oneself for the good of one and all. It is an endless striving for purity and perfection of what one thinks and what one acts for advancement of humanism. As Vivekananda significantly replies to an enquiry on the necessity for doing good to others:

> Well, it is necessary for one's own good. We become forgetful of the ego when we think of the body as dedicated to the service of others—the body with which most complacently we identify the ego. And in the long run comes the consciousness of disembodiedness. The more intently you think of the well-being of others, the more oblivious of self you become. In this way, as gradually your heart gets purified by work, you will come to feel the truth that your own Self is pervading all beings and all things. Thus it is that doing good to others constitutes a way, a means of revealing one's own Self or Atman. Know this also to be one of the spiritual practices, a discipline for God-realisation. Its aim also is Self-realisation. Exactly as that aim is attained by Jnana (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and so on, also by work for the sake of others.[4]

Making education meaningful and purposeful in order to make it truly humanised is what Vivekananda has always harped on in his different viewpoints on education. He is keen enough that the system of education prevailing in our country allows education *sans* the spirit of humanism. Which is why whatever education is received and imparted fails to keep up with the progress of time and with the wills and aspirations of humanity. He also suggests that education that does not come close to life as it is lived and ought to be lived becomes a mere burden and never helps to learn the worth of humanity. In one of his answers to a question put forward by Shri Priya Nath Sinha, one of his devoted admirers, he categorically asserts:

> We have to do only so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears, eyes, etc., and finally everything will become easy. But the root is religion. Religion is as the rice, and everything else, like the curries. Taking only curries causes indigestion, and so is the case with taking rice alone. Our pedagogues are making parrots of our boys and ruining their brains by cramming a lot of subjects into them. Looking from one standpoint, you should rather be grateful to the Viceroy for his proposal of reforming the University system, which means practically abolishing higher education; the country will, at least, feel some relief by having breathing time. Goodness gracious! What a fuss and fury about graduating, and after a few days, all cools down! And after all that, what is it they learn but that what religion and customs we have are all bad, and what the Westerners have are all good! At last they cannot keep the wolf from the door! What does it matter if this higher education remains or goes? It would be better if the people got a little technical education, so that they might find work and earn their bread instead of dawdling about and crying for service.[5]

Vivekananda strongly believes that in order to be true to education and therefore to humanism, religion is not the topmost priority. Instead, the religion of education, which is the true religion in order to negotiate the sorrows and sufferings of the people who are ignorant and oppressed, is the need of the hour. That is what is humanised education or education that cares for the all round well being of humankind. In one of his poignant addresses to Alasinga, Vivekananda wholeheartedly asserts:

> Let us pray, "Lead, Kindly Light"—a beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth

> to lead us. I always pray for you: you must pray for me. Let each one of us pray day and night for the downtrodden millions in India who are held fast by poverty, priest-craft and tyranny—pray day and night for them. I care more to preach religion to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. I see what they call the poor of this country and how many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in India! Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken forever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a Mahatman (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratman (wicked soul). Let us unite our wills in continued prayer for their good. We may die unknown, unpitied, unbewailed, without accomplishing anything—but not one thought will be lost. It will take effect, sooner or later. My heart is too full to express my feeling; you know it, you can imagine it. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them![6]

That education for humanism, which Vivekananda identifies as the religion of education or the religion of all religions, necessitates a look afresh. Truly, with all our plans and programmes of education we are yet to reach the ignored and the downtrodden masses who for no fault of their own are yet to receive the light of education that pays respect to mankind. Leaving education apart is to leave education at the hands of ignorance, which is the lot of humanity today. To make a real overhauling in education in terms of humanism of the right kind as Vivekananda visualises is to make education practical in negotiating the ills of the society. As a matter of fact, his suggestions on humanised education bear significance in encountering darkness with light, ignorance with knowledge, ego or Aham with altruism and poverty with the blessings of reacting to it with all forces—internal or external whatsoever. In one of his poems he adroitly reveals the role of education as an invaluable force for allround advancement and elimination of all shortcomings of life:

> Anger, desire, greed, Moha (and the rest),
> Whence issues forth the waving of the play
> Of this existence; the home wherein dwells
> Knowledge, and non-knowledge—whose centre is
> The feeling of small self, the "Aham!" "Aham!"
> Full of the dual sense of pleasure and of pain,
> Teeming with birth and life, decay and death,
> Whose arms are "The External" and "The Internal",
> All things that are, down to the ocean's depths,
> Up to sun, moon, and stars in spanless space—
> The Mind, the Buddhi, Chitta, Ahamkar,
> The Deva, Yaksha, man and demon, all,
> The quadruped, the bird, the worm, all insect life,
> The atom and its compound, all that is
> Animate and inanimate, all, all—
> The Internal and the External—dwell
> In that one common plane of existence!
> This outward presentation is of order gross,
> As hair on human brow, Ay! Very gross.[7]

To make education our own, very own, what is right now necessary is to feel the pulse of humanity with the right beat of education as Vivekananda time and again reminds us. This requires a strong bent of mind well disciplined and well devoted for the cause of loving others in order to love oneself best. Education is neither a fashion nor a fabrication but a force eternal and permanent that propels the spirit of humanism. Vivekananda's vision of humanism thus crystallised in education of the right order and discipline is yet to be translated into reality.

Are we prepared?

References

1 *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati Memorial Edition, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 1989, Vol. VIII, p. 146.
2 *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 246-47.
3 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 411-12.
4 *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 111-12.
(Lord Curzon, who took steps to raise the standard of University education so high as to make it very expensive and hence, almost inaccessible to boys of the middle classes).
5 *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 366-67.
6 *Ibid.*, p. 58.
(Delusion such as pride and malice, the six-fold evil).
7 *Ibid.*, "A Song I Sing to Thee", Vol. IV, p. 513.

3

Humanism and Society: Vivekananda's Guidelines

Unlike any other humanistic and social visionary, Swami Vivekananda looks upon humanism as an inseparable part and a mouthpiece of every society. His vision of humanism allows a man to be men in the society for the very end-in-view of doing good to mankind. Goodness, as he observes and idealizes in his thought and action, devotion and dedication, becomes the key to attaining fullness of growth and development of personality. He does not want man to be a burden of the society as it is evident in almost every society where society is compelled to be made responsible for the individual's upliftment without involvement genuine or earnest. He also does not want man to be a mere show in the society where every action on the part of the latter is either camouflaged or artificial. Like a practical social humanist, he delves deep into the very inaction and indolence on the part of an individual in the society and deeply analyses the fundamental causes of their inaction or indolence whatsoever or howsoever.

Admittedly, to explore and expand the vision of man in the society, Vivekananda emphasizes on how to become a truly social being who sincerely cares for promotion and dissemination of true humanism. In this regard, what is very exceptional and interesting is that he equates and honours every person in the society as the embodiment of the All Beautiful. He expands the vision of the latter in fusion with the former, thereby opening a new vista of imagination superbly wedded to devotion. His devotion to man and society thus harmonized in oneness in the vision of the All Beautiful delivers devotion to true meditation. Thus, the *Jiva* becomes the *Shiva* and all goodness finds appropriate avenues of efflorescence in the human society.

Vivekananda is also very radical and reactionary in his fusion of society and humanism. Quite apart from the fact that the ends-in-view of humanism specially in relation to society are to somehow or other consolidate our attention and interest in bringing about some sort of materialistic advancement in the forms of wealth and affluence, comfort and carefree life, he strongly believes and solemnly involves himself in elucidating the fact that a genuine and ideal society always makes inroads to inner awareness side by side with awareness for others who become one's very own. Hence, the admittance of Devattva or Divinity in every human being in the society in order to embrace and enkindle humanism in the right perspective of excellence and ascent of the human society.

What type of society does Vivekananda actually deserve? What role should the people of the society play for all-round development of the society? What should education play in the society so that the latter may develop with the advancement of man? What should be the relation between society and religion? These and all other allied questions necessitate reliable and appropriate guidelines to which Vivekananda draws our attention to negotiate the manifold problems and complexities writ large in the society. His primary concern in this respect is to arouse in every person in the society a certain sense of genuine urge for advancement of the society by means of down-to-earth, radical and revolutionary involvement in multi-dimensional problems and issues in the society so that the undesirable appalling differences between man and man in the society consequential to race, religion, caste, creed etc. can be totally eliminated. For this what is of utmost importance is to come straight to the lowly and the lost and in their midst work unflinchingly for the advancement of man and society. He prescribes no formula, no theory or dogma. He also prescribes no principle, no stricture or compulsion. Instead, what he suggests is to work and work sincerely with all devotion and dedication, sincerity and toleration. Society as he feels and thinks is far away from the heart of man, and man too, is almost totally dissociated from the society. It is, as it were, a relationship between the son and the mother haplessly separated from each other, knowing very well that these will bring disaster to both. Society is the pulse of man to be felt not in isolation but in fusion where the points of harmony are those of sincerity and devotion.

Vivekananda, therefore, advises us to be as near and genuine to the society to which we belong as to ourselves, to our near and dear ones. This sense of oneness to the society can be possible only when we feel from our heart of hearts the inseparable relationship between man and society and all our service to the latter becomes worthwhile and significant. That he does not give us any sermon or any other kind of order or instruction compulsory or otherwise clearly indicates the fact that his religion is actually the religion of service to the society to the best of one's abilities and involvement. He also averts any dogma or strictures because these more often than not, become ambiguous and irrelevant, and as these become so, these stand in the way of any practical approach to advancement of man and society.

With a wide and generous platform of social involvement, Vivekananda makes inroads to humanism with some explicit and specific objectives. First, all social involvements should have a sound and systematic basis on education. The role of education for social change should always be backed by a humanistic pattern of education where each and every member of the society sincerely feels and acts for whatever represents the best and worthiest in advancement of humanism. Second, every form of social involvement for the cause of humanism should have a clear backdrop of what one actually wants and what one sincerely accomplishes. It may not be inappropriate to refer to the fact that these two components viz., the definiteness of purpose and the iota of sincerity are scarcely synchronized in almost all our socialistic endeavour. The inevitable consequence is that the seeds of humanism inherent in everyone of us remain far from being seedlings, saplings or plants as it were of social and humane efflorescence. Vivekananda always wants to erase the gap between what we think and actually do. His concern for man and society is one of humane advancement. As a radical social humanist, he expands and evolves a new and enlightened vision of humanism where the vision of God is the vision of man. As he poignantly observes,

> Perception is our only real knowledge or religion. Talking about it for ages will never make us know our soul. There is no difference between theories and atheism. In fact, the atheist is the truer man. Every step I take in the light is mine forever. When you go to a country and see it, then it is yours. We have each to see for ourselves; teachers can only "bring the food", we must eat it to be nourished. Argument can never prove God save as a logical conclusion.
>
> It is impossible to find God outside of ourselves. Our own souls contribute all the divinity that is outside of us. We are the greatest temple. The objectification is only a faint imitation of what we see within ourselves.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 59.

Harmonizing divinity with society for efflorescence of true humanism as Vivekananda thinks and experiments with incomparable success is the forte' of man the excellent. Such an excellence of man always reminds one to be men in man and *vice-versa* so that the spirit *Bahu jana hitaya* or altruism becomes one of the foremost objectives of social endeavour. In this respect, he is very critical of any kind of distinction between man and man so far as his position as a social being is considered. He does not allow any distinction between the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the advantaged and the disadvantaged or the affluent and the penny-less, for these differences stand in the way of advancement of humane sensibilities. He prefers to make a categorical point of departure in conceptualizing and humanizing the vision of society where each is for and all for each. Since there is no difference between each and all as an altruistic human being in the society, the question of distinction between one person and the other in respect of class, creed, and so on, does not make any way for clear and distinct visualisation of the true image of man and society. He finds man and God in the same platform in the society, and society having its root in man as such, and this clarifies the position of man as a respectable and responsive representative of the All Serene.

As a social connoisseur of humanism, Vivekananda looks upon the process of living as one of togetherness—the process where the lesson of sociability and, for that end-in-view, socialization is an evolving one from the person to the family expanding the horizon of the self to the universe. Therefore, humanism, as he eyes in the form of socialism in general and socialization of man in particular becomes, as it were, an atomic fusion embracing all weal and woe of humanity. In his own words:

> It is the feeling of a unity towards which we are all going. Every action of our lives—the most material, the grossest as well as finest, the highest, the most spiritual is alike tending this one ideal, the finding of unity. A man is single. He marries. Apparently, it may be a selfish act, but at the same time, the impulsion, the motive power, is to find that unity. He has children, he has friends, he loves his country, he loves the world, and ends by loving the whole universe. Irresistibly we are impelled towards that perfection which consists in finding the unity, killing this little and making ourselves broader and broader. This is the goal, the end towards which the universe is rushing. Every atom is trying to go and join itself to the next atom. Atoms after atoms combine, making huge balls, the earths, the suns, the moons, the stars, the planets. They in their turn, are trying to rush towards each other, and, at last, we know

> that the whole universe, mental and material, will be found into one.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 4-5.

Elimination of selfishness is as Vivekananda asserts the *sine qua non* of social excellence, which prompts man to be indivisible, non-individual and altruistic in ways and means of humanistic endeavour. Thus, the sense of socio-aesthetic advancement of man finds manifestation in cultivation of sympathy, goodness and all other components of humane sensitiveness. As he adroitly elucidates,

> Just as this universe has its existence in separation, in distinction, and all the while is rushing towards unity, non-separation, so in our little worlds, each soul is born, as it were, cut off from the rest of the world. The more ignorant, the more unenlightened the soul, the more it thinks that it is separate from the rest of the universe. The more ignorant the person, the more he thinks, he will die or will be born, and so forth—ideas that are an expression of this separateness. But we find that, as knowledge comes, man grows, morality is evolved, and the idea of non-separateness begins. Whether men understand it or not, they are impelled by that power behind to become unselfish. That is the foundation of all morality. It is the quintessence of all ethics, preached in any language, or in any religion, or by any prophet in the world "Be thou unselfish", "Not 'I', but 'thou' "—that is the background of all ethical codes. And what is meant by this is the recognition of non-individuality—that you are a part of me, and I of you; the recognition that in hurting you I hurt myself, and in helping you I help myself; the recognition that there cannot possibly be death for me when you live. When one worm lives in this universe, how can I die? For my life is in the life of that worm. At the same time it will teach me that we cannot leave one of our fellow-beings without helping him, that in his good consists my good.
>
> —*Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

How does Vivekananda explain goodness from practical and social points of view? Why would one stick to it for the cause of humanism? How does he do away with utilitarianism in order to make room for desirable and spontaneous socialistic endeavour? Vivekananda's reply to all these questions is very specific:

> Any system that wants to bind men down to the limits of their own societies is not able to find an explanation for the ethical laws of mankind. The Utilitarian wants us to give up the struggle after the Infinite, the reaching-out for the Super-sensuous, as impracticable as absurd, and in the same breath asks us to take up ethics and do good to society. Why should we do good? Doing good is a secondary consideration. We must have an ideal. Ethics itself is not the end, but the means to the end. If the end is not there, why should we be ethical? Why should I do good to the other men, and not injure them? If happiness is the good of mankind why should I not make myself happy and others unhappy? What prevents me? In the second place, the basis of utility is too narrow. All the current social forms and methods are derived from society as it exists, but what right has the Utilitarian to assume that society is eternal? Society did not exist ages ago, possibly will not exist ages hence. Most probably, it is one of the passing stages through which we are going towards a higher evolution, and any law that is derived from society alone cannot be eternal, cannot cover the whole ground of man's nature. At best, therefore, Utilitarian theories can only work under present social conditions. Beyond that they have no value.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 63-64 .

To build a good society is to do good to others. But doing good to others as a humanists as Vivekananda categorically asserts, is to actually do good to oneself. He elucidates this essence of humanism from the standpoint of helping others in order to help oneself, which, indeed, justifies one's endeavour at attaining excellence:

> Our duty to others means helping others; doing good to the world. Why should we do good to the world? Apparently, to help the world, but really to help ourselves. We should always try to help the world, that should be the highest motive in us; but if we consider well, we find that the world does not require our help at all. This world was not made that you and I should come and help it. I once read a sermon in which it was said, "All this beautiful world is very good because it gives us time and opportunity to help others". Apparently, this is a very beautiful statement, but is it not a blasphemy to say that the world needs our help? We cannot deny that there is much misery in it; to go out and help others is, therefore, the best thing we can do, although in the long run, we shall find that helping others is only helping ourselves.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 75.

For a graded human society Vivekananda justifies and evaluates man in terms of his actual role in negotiating diverse components of morality as practised and followed in the society. Emphasizing on the role of the three fundamental forces—*Sattva, Raja and Tama*—in human thoughts and actions he deals with morality and religion from the points of efflorescence of individuality. He refers to these three fundamental forces not merely in their relations to morality as such but essentially to social and humane efflorescence. Moreover, he expands the vision of morality in terms of humanism by welcoming individual, rational and dynamic processes of social advancement which makes superior inroads to all-endearing efflorescence of humanism. As he significantly explains,

> In every man there are these three forces. Sometimes *Tamas* prevails. We become lazy, we cannot move, we are inactive, bound down by certain ideas or by mere dullness. At other times activity prevails, and at still other times that calm balancing of both. Again, in different men, one of these forces is generally predominant. The characteristic of one man is inactivity, dullness and laziness; that of another,

activity, power, manifestation of energy; and in still another we find the sweetness, calmness, and gentleness, which are due to the balancing of both action and inaction. So in all creation—in animals, plants, and men—we find the more or less typical manifestation of all the three different forces.

Karma Yoga has specially to deal with these three forces. By teaching what they are and how to employ them, it helps us to do our work better. Human society is a graded organisation. We all know about morality, and we all know about duty, but at the same time we find that in different countries the significance of morality differs greatly. What is regarded as moral in one country may in another be considered perfectly immoral. For instance, in one country cousins may marry; in another, it is thought to be very immoral; in one, man may marry their sisters-in-law; in another, it is regarded as immoral; in one country people may marry only once; in another, many times; and so forth. Similarly, in all other departments of morality, we find the standard varies greatly—yet we have the idea that there must be a universal standard of morality.

So it is with duty. The idea of duty varies much among different nations. In one country, if a man does not do certain things, people will say he has acted wrongly; while if he does those very things in another country, people will say that he has not acted rightly—and yet we know that there must be some universal idea of duty. In the same way, one class of society thinks that certain things are among its duty, while another class thinks quite the opposite and would be horrified if it had to do those things. Two ways are left open to us—the way of the ignorant, who think that is only one way to truth and that all the rest are wrong; and the way of the wise, who admit that, according to our mental constitution or the different planes of existence in which we are, duty and morality may vary. The important thing is to know that there are gradations of duty and of morality—that the duty of one state of life, in one set of circumstances, will not and cannot be that of another.

—*Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 36-37.

As a pioneer in social revolution, Vivekananda time and again reminds us of the importance of the awakening of every human being by means of introducing education of the right kind. This will enable every human being to attain salvation not by any external force but through his own endeavour in being worthwhile to himself as well as to the human society. This is the most reliable and significant way to negotiate 'the tyranny of the minority' as he most practically suggests:

> At times great men would evolve new ideas of progress, and kings would give them the sanction of law. Thus social improvements had been in the past made in India, and in modern times to effect such progressive reforms, we will have first to build up such an authoritative power. Kings having gone, the power is the people's. We have, therefore, to wait till the people are educated, till they understand their needs and are ready and able to solve their problems. The tyranny of the minority is the worst tyranny in the world. Therefore, instead of frittering away our energies on ideal reforms, which will never become practical, we had better go to the root of the evil and make a legislative body, that is to say, educate our people, so that they may be able to solve their own problems. Until that is done all these ideal reforms will remain ideals only.
>
> The new order of things is the salvation of the people by the people, and it takes time to make it workable, especially in India, which has always in the past been governed by kings.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 215-16.

How to make our society truly humanistic? How to orient it in such a way so that it makes ample avenues for every person to understand and appreciate the indomitable spiritual force that he possess within himself? What should be the role of higher institutions for evolution of spiritual consciousness in each and every person in the society? What are the positive signs of healthy social changes for efflorescence of true humanism? Vivekananda makes a very distinct suggestion in this regard and emphasizes on the manifestation of the inherent force of spirituality in every human being so that there is a systematic, gradual and harmonious process of development from the individual to the community, from the community to the society, from the society to the nation and from the nation to the world at large. In his own words:

> All healthy social changes are the manifestations of the spiritual forces working within, and if these are strong and well adjusted, society will arrange itself accordingly. Each individual has to work out his own salvation; there is no other way, and so also with nations. Again, the great institutions of every nation are the conditions of its very existence and cannot be transformed by the mould of any other race. Until higher institutions have been evolved, any attempt to break the old ones will be disastrous. Growth is always gradual.
>
> It is very easy to point out the defects of institutions, all being more or less imperfect, but he is the real benefactor of humanity who helps the individual to overcome the imperfections under whatever institutions he may live. The individuals being raised, the nation and its institutions are bound to rise. But customs and laws are ignored by the virtuous, and unwritten but mightier laws of love, sympathy, and integrity take their place. Happy is the nation which can rise to the necessity of but few law books, and needs no longer to bother its head about this or that institution. Good men rise beyond all laws, and will help their fellows to rise under whatever conditions they live.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 415-16.

The process of humanism as Vivekananda time and again reminds us, is one of self-sensitization where the process of self-evolution always takes place most unassumingly and spontaneously. The humane appeal in social action and contemplation is a matter of ascent and excellence of any individual who always considers the society as the very womb of consciousness for nobler aims and higher prospects of life beyond life. Admittedly, Vivekananda wants to make us aware of the fact that there is hardly any difference between society and humanism because these are complementary to each other, and, for all practical purposes, the seeds of humanism ought to be grown and nurtured in the warmth of socialization. This is the surest way to achieve the most enviable objective of honouring man as the best representative of All Serene.

Vivekananda always highlights humanism in terms of the role of the individual in the society where the interest of the individual completely merges in that of the society. Self-denial and self-sacrifice become the eternal and abiding spirit of any individual who is always prepared to undergo any eventuality for the cause of humanism. Vivekananda also suggests the great humanistic spirit of an individual who knows how to be true to the society by adjusting and endearing himself to the changing needs of sorrows and sufferings. This is not only desirable but also obligatory for every sensible person who really wants to be a true member of the society. His own exposition on this point is vibrant with the promise and poignance of socio-humanism:

> The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole; apart from the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable—this is the eternal truth and is the bedrock on which the universe is built. To move slowly towards the infinite whole, bearing a constant feeling of intense sympathy and sameness with it, being happy with its happiness and being distressed in its affliction, is the individual's sole duty. Not only is it his duty, but in its transgression is his death, while compliance with this great truth leads to life immortal. This is the law of nature, and who can throw dust into her ever-watchful eyes? None can hoodwink society and deceive it for any length of time. However much there may have accumulated heaps of refuse and mud on the surface of society—still, in the bottom of these heaps the life-breath of society is ever to be found pulsating with the vibrations of love

> and self-denying compassion for all Society is like the earth that patiently bears incessant molestations; but she wakes up one day, however long that may be in coming, and the force of the shaking tremors of that awakening hurls off to a distance the accumulated dirt of self-seeking measures piled up during millions of patient and silent years!
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 463-64.

To mould the society for a better humanistic endeavour as Vivekananda always sustains in his vision of humanism is to continually prepare oneself for the denial of the self for the good of the society. This requires a constant vigil of the self to guard oneself against all evils, desires and temptations and never allow oneself to be a prey to passivity or inaction. The brute in every one of us is always there trying to misguide us in every bit of our honest and sincere endeavour to turn our society into a worthwhile heaven of humanity where each and every member of the society feels in his heart of hearts a genuine urge for whatever sacrifice the society needs for the advancement of humanism. What Vivekananda wants from each and everyone of the society is to become mad for the well-being of all in the society by ruthlessly eliminating all sorts of traditional and age-old sham differences of caste, creed, religion etc. The religion of any society, to be real and practical, is the one and only one, and that is no other than that of humanism.

Like an ardent humanist, Vivekananda reminds us of the fact that the efflorescence of humanism beckons a broadened vision and a widened outlook so that the mind is never belittled by narrowness or vain glory. The ills of the society are often prompted by our so-called knowledge and wisdom, health and wealth, power and progress. A certain sense of inwardness of vision for the well-being of the society ought to be the fundamental end-in-view of our little bit of endeavour for the advancement of humanism. Generally, what is witnessed in the name of education in the society is an appalling manifestation of selfishness where every individual in the name of being educated segregates himself from the rest of the society. The 'I' becomes hopelessly dissociated from 'We' and as such the society becomes a lonely and selfish array of individuals utterly bereft of the conjoint and communicated spirit of humanism.

What Vivekananda actually wants from each and everyone in the society is the warmth of sincerity of purpose whereby every form of involvement is surcharged with a spirit of evolution of consciousness for advancement of humanism. Such an evolution of consciousness is possible only when each and every individual in the society honours and manifests his own identity as a true representative of humanism and thereby of the All Serene. Admittedly, when Vivekananda speaks of a true Yogi, he highlights this truth by honouring the indomitable force of every human being who with hardwork and perseverance translates a new religion of humanism. In this connection, his vibrant words of advice may be sincerely recalled and followed:

> Those who really want to be Yogis must give up, once for all, this nibbling of things. Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life—think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced. Others are mere talking machines. If we really want to be blessed, and make others blessed, we must go deeper. The first step is not to disturb the mind, not to associate with persons whose ideas are disturbing. All of you know that certain persons, certain places, certain foods, repel you. Avoid them; and those who want to go to the highest, must avoid all company, good or bad. Practise hard; whether you live or die does not matter. You have to plunge in and work, without thinking of the result. If you are brave enough, in six months you will be a perfect Yogi. To succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. "I will drink the ocean", says the persevering soul, "at my will mountains will crumble up". Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard, and you will reach the goal.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 177-78.

To Vivekananda, the fusion of society and humanism always demands every individual to be hardworking, persuasive, sincere and dutiful. This apparently is easy but a real worker of the society works for others in order to work for himself best. This is renunciation of the highest kind, which enables man to exercise and sustain humane sensibilities. As soon as every member of the society is interested not in himself first but for others, society becomes vibrant with the sprit of humanism. This is what Swami Vivekananda earnestly appeals to make regeneration of humanity.

Admittedly, the glory of humanism as Vivekananda visualises and translates into action is one of earnest endeavour on the part of every human being. There must be a good syncrhonisation between ethics and reality, and the invaluable objective of humanity is to be always prepared for self-sacrifice for the good of others in the society. As a practical humanist he significantly remarks,

> Analysing the ethical laws of the world and comparing them with the actual state of things, two laws stand out supreme. The one, that of repelling everything from us—separating ourselves from everyone—which leads to self-aggrandisement even at the cost of everyone else's happiness. The other, that of self-sacrifice—of taking no thought of ourselves—only of others. Both spring from the search for happiness—one, of finding happiness in injuring others and the ability of feeling that happiness only in our own senses. The other, of finding happiness in doing good to others—the ability of feeling happy, as it were through the senses of others. The great and the good of the world are those who have the latter power predominating. Yet both these are working side by side conjointly; in almost everyone they are found in mixture, one or the other predominating.
>
> —*Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 452.

When comes such a practical and humanistic visionary?

4

Humanism and Religion: Vivekananda's Breakthroughs

Unlike any other humanist, Swami Vivekananda synchronises religion with humanism in an incomparable and unparalleled manner. He identifies religion as the 'soul of humanity'—the soul that responds to the realities of life and evolution of human consciousness. He never considers humanism apart from religion and *vice versa*. As such, the efflorescence of religion always depends on how it best serves humans under all trying circumstances. Contrary to paying importance to rigid dogmatism which stands in the way of dynamism of religion, he is more interested in making religion a very comprehensive and essential component of growth and development of humanity. As he characteristically asserts:

> Between all great religions of the world there are many points of similarity; and so startling is this likeness, at times, as to suggest the idea that in many particulars the different religions have copied from one another.
>
> This act of imitation has been laid at the door of different religions and that it is a superficial charge is evident from the following facts:

> Religion is fundamental in the very soul of humanity; and as all life is the evolution of that which is within it, of necessity, expresses itself through various peoples and nations.
>
> The language of the soul is one, the language of nations are many; their customs and methods of life are widely different. Religion is of the soul and finds expression through various nations, languages, and customs. Hence it follows that the difference between the different religions of the world is one of expression and not of substance; and their points of similarity and unity are of the soul, are intrinsic, as the language of the soul is one, in which whatever peoples and under whatever circumstances it manifests itself. The same sweet harmony is vibrant there also, as it is on many and diverse instruments.[1]

To learn religion in terms of humanity as Vivekananda sets forth is to learn the spirit inherent in it. And to learn it is to be sincerely involved in it so much so that it must enter deep into the heart of hearts. Religion, therefore, is a continual askance and enquiry into the heartland of humanity. The heartland is definitely a complex one inviting a challenge—a challenge to discover and rediscover oneself in terms of purity and perseverance. Vivekananda, therefore, asserts the importance of purity of soul, which allows religion to be pursued in terms of humanity. As he significantly observes:

> The conditions necessary in the taught are purity, a real thirst after knowledge, and perseverance. No impure soul can be religious; this is the one great condition; purity in every way is absolutely necessary. The other condition is a real thirst after knowledge. Who wants? That is the question. We get whatever we want—that is an old, old law. He who wants, gets. To want religion is a very difficult thing, not so easy as we generally think. Then we always forget that religion does not consist in hearing talks, or in reading books but it is a continuos struggle, a grappling with our own nature, a continuous fight till the victory is achieved. It is not a question of one or two days, of years,

> or of lives, but it may be hundreds of lifetimes, and you must be ready for that. It may come immediately, or it may not come in hundreds of lifetimes; and we must be ready for that.[2]

Turning to religion as an indispensable spirit of advancement of humanity, Vivekananda unfolds religion from four dimensions:

First, it must be a matter of the soul of man.

Second, it must cater to efflorescence of humanism.

Third, it is a spirit both evolutionary and revolutionary in the sense that it always requires a truly educated mind that cares for knowledge crystallised in education, and at the same time, it must be radical in approach to what makes one sincere to be in the service of self-ascent and self-excellence.

Fourth, it must be solemnised with the spirit of altruism.

Viewing from the above, Vivekanada's breakthroughs in religion from the diverse dimensions of humanism can be tabled as follows:

Study of Religious Scriptures

Conceptual Components	Identification of Different Conceptual Patterns	Analysis of Manifold Avenues of Religious Thoughts	Evaluational Patterns Theoretical/ Practical

The spirit of humanism should always back a study of the conceptual components related to religious scriptures. While making an in-depth study of the components, care should be taken to see that no untoward matter directly or indirectly encroaches and becomes a constraint to understanding and appreciating either religion in general or religious scriptures in particular.

As a pioneer in efflorescence of humanism in and through religion, Vivekananda asserts on a scientific and objective approach to each conceptual component which will definitely eliminate all sense of ambiguity and misunderstanding arising out if a purely subjective approach to religion. Moreover, an atmosphere of mutual understanding and appreciation together with an all-embracing vision of altruism in negotiating each and every component thus studied allows everyone to be a living partner to advancement of humanism.

Identification of different conceptual patterns of religious thoughts is definitely a very difficult activity. In the study of any religion every concept needs to be identified in terms of its typical hints and suggestions and also in terms of comparison and contrast with other conceptual patterns. The process of identification is a continual endeavour to establish and re-establish newer relationship with similar other concepts and arrive at a conclusion which highlights the spirit of religion in the right perspective of ascent and excellence.

Analysis of the manifold avenues of religious thoughts as one encounters in one's pursuit of religion necessitates one's deep and sustained involvement in every item of religious experience. This also demands a certain pattern of individual creative and critical consciousness, which enriches the finer nuances of religion from every item of experience. Moreover, with adroit analysis of every religious thought, the study of religion becomes comprehensive, all-embracing, suggestive and impressive, allowing every religion to be distinct in its unique contribution to advancement of human growth and relationship.

So far as the evoluation of religion from the standpoint of different religious scripts are concerned, both theoretical and practical aspects of religion are to be given equal importance, since religion either in theory or in practice alone would be partial, half-hearted, incomplete and even irrelevant. A careful and conjoint approach to religion bearing in mind the diverse changes of approach and attitude to human development would certainly lead to a new dawn of humanism that promises fullness and perfection of man.

Like a humanist par excellence, Vivekananda regards religion as an essential element of human development from different perspectives. As such, religion becomes a part and parcel of one's very being always striving for ascent and excellence. What, according to him, is badly necessary is to understand, explore and expand the infinite power inherent in every human being. As he vibrantly asserts:

> This universe of ours, the universe of the senses, the rational, the intellectual, is bounded on both sides by the illimitable, the unknowable, the ever unknown. Herein is the search, herein are the inquiries, here are the facts; from this comes the light which is known to the world as religion. Essentially, however, religion belongs to the super-sensuous and not to the sense plane. It is beyond all reasoning, and not on the plane of intellect. It is a vision, an inspiration, a plunge into the unknown and unknowable, making the unknowable more than known, for it can never be 'known'. This search has been in the human mind, as I believe, from the very beginning of humanity. There cannot have been human reasoning and intellect in any period of the world's history without this struggle, this search beyond. In our little universe, this human mind, we see a thought arise. Whence it rises we do not know, and when it disappears, where it goes, we know not either. The macrocosm and the microcosm are, as it were, in the same groove, passing through the same stages, vibrating in the same key.[3]

As an unparalleled practical religious visionary, Vivekananda looks upon humanism as a living and dynamic process of human growth and development. He cares for the neglected and distressed humanity more than rites and scriptures of religion because he feels in his heart of hearts that true religion always represents the neglected and the depressed, the lowly and the lost. He aches for the ailing humanity because he knows very well that unless the sorrows and sufferings of mankind are diligently and honourably negotiated, religion loses all its inner worth.

Admittedly, Vivekananda categorically identifies and practises religion in terms of humanity and as such pays more importance to the real happenings of day-to-day life which enable everyone of us to know and practise religion that cares for and promotes the divinity inherent in everyone of us. It is interesting to recall in this connection how he categorically expresses his belief in God and man in terms of the religion of man. In a letter written to Alasinga Perumal, he poignantly asserts:

> What have I to do with this "ism" or that "ism"? I am the servant of the Lord, and where on earth is there a better field than here for propagating all high ideas? Here, where if one man is against me, a hundred hands are ready to help me; here, where man feels for man, weeps for his fellow-men and women are goddesses! Even idiots may stand up to hear themselves praised, and cowards assume the attitude of the brave, when everything is sure to turn out well, but the true hero works in silence. How many Buddhas die before one finds expression! My son, I believe in God, and I believe in man. I believe in helping the miserable. I believe in going even to hell to save others. Talk of the Westerners? They have given me food, shelter, friendship, protection—even the most orthodox Christians! What do our people do when any of their priests go to India? You do not touch them even, they are MLECHCHHAS! No man, no nation, my son, can hate others and live; India's doom was sealed the very day they invented the word MLECHCHHA and stopped from communion with others. Take care how you foster that idea. It is good to talk glibly about the Vedanta, but how hard to carry out even its least precepts![4]

How to make religion come closest to humanity? How to make it an inseparable part of human welfare by eliminating all kinds of narrowness and superstition? Vivekananda wants religion to be a vital force for awakening of man. He makes a clarion call for manifestation of character and many Buddhas for advancement of religion in the best interest of humanism.

For a real awakening of humanism, religion as Vivekananda distinctly unfolds his vision of the good of humankind in the efflorescence of inherent divinity and love, right now necessitates a bold preparation for self-sacrifice. All plans and programmes of action for synchronisation of religion and humanism will, then, become an instinctive and natural endeavour, which will certainly assure a new dawn of consciousness of humanity.

In a letter written to Miss Noble on June 7, 1896, Vivekananda characteristically asserts:

> My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach into mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.
>
> This world is in chain of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressors. One idea that I see clear as daylight is that misery is caused by ignorance and nothing else. Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the Law, it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity.
>
> Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.
>
> It is no superstition with you, I am sure, you have the making in you of a world-mover, and others will also come. Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great ones! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call. What more is in life? What greater work?[5]

Work to be work in perfect tune with religion must, according to Vivekananda, respond to the cause of humanism. As a humanist par excellence, he always defines and explores religion in the heart-beat of every human being and always emphasizes on sincerely understanding and appreciating religion in terms of man, the Divine Being. His heart aches for the poor and the distressed, the lowly and the lost because he feels that every Divine Being inherent in every one of them is despised and neglected. A practical and vibrant humanist, he brings religion closest to humans and makes a clarion call to whole-heartedly devote ourselves to ameliorate their sorrows and sufferings as best as possible. As he solemnly asserts:

> Let us pray, "Lead, Kindly Light"—a beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us. I always pray for you: you must pray for me. Let each of us pray day and night for the down-trodden millions of India who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny—pray day and night for them. I care more to preach religion to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. I see what they call the poor of the country, and how many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in India! Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? What is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think for them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way.[6]

Vivekananda wants to bring religion closest to the heartland of every human being so that it becomes the most vibrant and endearing factor of human ascent and excellence. "Be and make"—this is the motto that he all the time reminds us and makes us aware of the infinite spirit inherent in every human being. When he speaks of the evolution or involution of spirit, he actually emphasizes on evolution of intellectuality to respect the inherent divinity in every one irrespective of caste, creed, religion, a sinner or a saint. As he vibrantly asserts:

> Let us take our stand on the one central truth in our religion—the common heritage of the Hindus, the Buddhists, and Jains alike—the spirit of man, the Atman of man, the immortal, birthless, all-pervading, eternal

> soul of man whose glories the Vedas cannot themselves express, before whose majesty the universe with its galaxy upon galaxy of suns and stars and nebulae is as a drop. Every man or woman, nay, from the highest Devas to the worm that crawls under our feet, is such a spirit evoluted or involuted. The difference is not in kind, but in degree.
>
> The infinite power of the spirit, brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought evolves intellectually, and made to act upon itself makes of man a God.
>
> First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. "Be and make". Let this be our motto. Say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is a God. Even if there were a devil, it would be our duty to remember God always, and not the devil.[7]

Vivekananda never allows religion to be compartmentalised and concentrated for a certain section of people. He keeps the doors of all religions to be studied, discussed, appreciated and shared in a harmonious and disciplined manner so that every religion finds the right atmosphere of efflorescence in humane and enlightened sensibilities. There is no reason why one religion should get the upper hand over the other. He also denounces any approach to any observance of religious rules, regulations and rites that contradict or confront all good sense and sensibilities promoting human civilisation.

Religion as an invaluable exponent of advancement of humanism cannot but be a continual and spontaneous source of one's apposite means of manifesting the essential components of humane sensibilities like love, sympathy, cordiality and the like. Vivekananda reminds us of the fact that true religion is always a synthesis of all religions where every religion is looked upon as a great contributor to the cause of human development and no religion is thus playing its significant role of advancement if humanism ever loses its unique identity.

Comparing religions to watches having not the same kind of spring within everyone of them; Vivekananda adroitly refers to the oneness of religion and draws our attention to the essentials and values of all religions caring for the good of mankind. In his own words:

> Religion is not the outcome of the weakness of human nature; religion is not here because we fear a tyrant; religion is love, unfolding, expanding, growing. Take the watch—within the little case is machinery and a spring. The spring, when wound up, tries to regain its natural state. You are like the spring in the watch, and it is not necessary that all watches have the same kind of a spring, and it is not necessary that we all have the same religion. And why should we quarrel? If we all had the same ideas the world would be dead. External motion we call action; internal motion is human thought. The stone falls to the earth. You say it is caused by the law of gravitation. The horse draws the cart and God draws the horse. This is the law of motion. Whirlpools show the strength of the current; stop the current and stagnation causes. Motion is life. We must have unity and variety. The rose would smell as sweet by any other name, and it does not matter what your religion is called.[8]

As a faithful follower of the *Srimadbhagvad Gita*, Vivekananda upholds the pregnant truth of religion that never does a doer of good come to grief. He, therefore, stresses on self-sacrifice as a sanguine means of treading on the right avenue of efflorescence of religion. Renunciation in terms of exercise of humanity is what he earnestly considers to be man's forte in following religion. How does he spell out the most prized outcome of renunciation? Here is the answer in his own invaluable words that highlight humanism in the best possible aroma of serenity:

> The essential thing is renunciation. Without renunciation none can pour out his whole heart in working for others. The man of renunciation sees all with an equal eye and devotes himself to the service of all. Does not our Vedanta also teach us to see all with an equal eye? Why then do

> you cherish the idea that the wife and children are your own, more than others? At your very threshold, Narayana Himself, in the form of a poor beggar, is dying of starvation! Instead of giving him anything, would you only satisfy the appetite of your wife and children with delicacies?[9]

As a realist and practical humanist, Vivekananda denounces mere contemplation and resolution on doing service for others. On the other hand, he emphasises on actual and immediate involvement in the well-being of others irrespective of caste, creed or religion they belong to or profess in. As he categorically elucidates to one of his disciples:

> Show me through action what you can do, and then only I shall know that your coming to me is turned to some good account. Get up, and put your shoulders to the wheel —how long is this life for? As you have come into this world, leave some mark behind. Otherwise, where is the difference between you and the trees and stones? They, too, come into existence decay and die. If you like to be born and to die like them, you are at liberty to do so. Show me by your action that your reading the Vedanta has been fruitful of the highest good. Go and tell all, "In everyone of you lies that Eternal Power", and try to wake It up. What will you do with individual salvation? That is sheer selfishness. Throw aside your meditation, throw away your salvation and such things! Put your whole heart and soul in the work to which I have consecrated myself.[10]

What is the goal of humanism in terms of religion and that of religion in terms of humanism? Vivekananda has a very positive and categorical answer. He never allows any religion to be accepted as religion unless that religion is concerned with the cause of human welfare. As a matter of fact, he allows no room for belief in religion. Instead, he identifies and honours every religion in its involvement in one's being and becoming. This makes religion wide open for any one either to accept or to deny it so far as its apposite role for effulgence of humanism with all its enrichment of divinity is concerned. One can only then have the prized power of self-identity, self-analysis and self-assertion which would never allow any blind faith to creep in one's mind.

Indeed, blindness to any faith in any religion, which affects harbouring of humanism, is alien to the religious and humanistic philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. When he speaks of oneness of God and man, he highlights the glory of both being merged in the spirit of the ever -illumined One. As a practical humanist, he allows creativity, critical thinking and unending stream of curiosity and askance as the most reliable and effective guidelines to one's advancement of religious sensibilities. In his own vibrant words:

> When it was discovered that "I and my Father are one", the last word was said of religion. Then there only remained detail work. In true religion there is no faith or belief in the sense of blind faith. No great preacher ever preached that. That only comes with degeneracy. Fools pretend to be followers of this or that spiritual giant, and although they may be without power, endeavour to teach humanity to believe blindly. Believe what? To believe blindly is to degenerate the human soul. Be an atheist if you want, but do not believe in anything unquestionably. Why degrade the soul to the level of animals? You not only hurt yourselves thereby, but you injure society, and make danger for those that come after you. Stand up and reason out, having no blind faith. Religion is a question of being and becoming, not of believing. This is religion, and when you have attained to that, you have religion. Before that you are no better than the animals.[11]

Elsewhere, Vivekananda adroitly makes it clear that there is no difference between God and religion, whose true vision can be had only when we believe in the manifestation of God in man. All goodness to humanity is a religious affair and unless this truth of religion and humanism well embedded together is understood and applied in day-to-day affairs of life, both humanism and religion suffer. In his own poignant words:

> We believe that there is a germ of fruit in all religions and the Hindu bows down to them all; for in this world, truth is to be found not in subtraction but in addition. We would offer God a bouquet of the most beautiful flowers of all the diverse faiths. We must love God for love's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must do our duty for duty's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must worship the beautiful for beauty's sake, not for the hope of reward. Thus in the purity of our hearts shall we see God. Sacrifices, genuflexions, mumblings and mutterings are not religion. They are only good if they stimulate us to the brave performance of beautiful and heroic deeds and lift our thoughts to the apprehension of the divine perfection.[12]

Making religion our very own is to make religion a part and parcel of our life. And this is what Swami Vivekananda vibrantly asserts in his philosophy of religion and humanism. As such no dogma or theory that stands in the way of efflorescence of what is good for mankind is to be given an undesirable welcome to our very striving for being and becoming with an ardent faith in the goodness of man. Religion then becomes emancipated from religiosity and harbours in the heartland of humanism where catholicity of vision with a broadened mind and widened outlook becomes the inevitable forte.

Do we really and sincerely strive for the above?

References

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, 1989, Vol. VI, p. 46.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 24.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 51-52.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 501.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 57-58.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 421-22.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 382.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 383.
11. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 216.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

5

Humanism and Aesthetics: Vivekananda's Beckonings

The world of aesthetics is the world of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. It is a world that contains and disseminates the essence of humanism. It is also a world that allows one to ponder deep into the highest worth of mankind. With aesthetics as the ascent and excellence of humanism, one can go ahead with all the best in oneself. This is undoubtedly a continuous and sustained process, which involves what one ought to be as the greatest creation of the All Serene.

As a harbinger of humanism, Swami Vivekananda makes a natural and harmonious blending between aesthetics and humanism so much so that the spirit of humanism is all the time crystallised in aesthetic sensibilities. The consequence is always heartening. The finer aesthetic components find ample avenues of manifestation in working, dynamic and practical efflorescence of humanism. Moreover, a continuous and devoted endeavour to follow the right path of humanism in course of tuning oneself with the right diction of aesthetics definitely assures one with the prized end-in-view of fullness of man the Divine.

Vivekananda's viewpoints on aesthetics in terms of humanism have always the serene backdrop of excellence and ascent of man. When he speaks of the march of humanity, he always consolidates Truth as the most essential component that serves as a continual source of guidance to excellence and ascent. Naturally, man's consistent endeavour at finding out and making religion as the most dependable vehicle of Truth makes the former most thrilling and acceptable in every walk of life. Delineating on the spirit of unison and coherence between one religion and the other and asserting categorically that no two religions are ever contradictory because both embody and disseminate Truth, he exquisitely elucidates:

> Every religion has a soul behind it, and that soul may differ from the soul of another religion; but are they contradictory? Do they contradict or supplement each other?—that is the question. I look up the question when I was quite a boy, and have been studying all my life. Thinking that my conclusion may be of some help to you, I place it before you. I believe that they are not contradictory; they are supplementary. Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth. It is, therefore, addition not exclusion. That is the idea. System after system arises, each one embodying a great idea, and ideals must be added to ideals. And this is the march of humanity. Man never progresses from error to truth but from truth to truth, from lesser truth to higher truth—but never from error to truth.[1]

To be christened with the aesthetic component of disinterestedness in everything and to be all the time an earnest follower of purity and perfection is what Vivekananda considers to be the fundamental principle of humanistic aesthetics. For this, one cannot but respect and respond to the light within oneself—the "inner light"—that never allows the interest of the self above that of the greater selves of others who are all representing the All Serene. Therefore, self-sacrifice is the great aesthetic and humanistic force that enables one to be above oneself and prepares one to serve every human being to the best of one's abilities. When Vivekananda inspires every one of us to relentlessly serve humans and untiringly work for them without caring for self-interest, his aesthetic vision of humanism is in perfect tune with the great end-in-view of aesthetics: extinction of personality. In his own words:

> To attain liberation through work, join yourselves to work but without desire, looking for no result. Such work leads to knowledge, which in turn brings emancipation. To give up work before you know, leads to misery. Work done for the self gives no bondage. Neither desire pleasure nor fear pain from work. It is the mind and the body that work, not I. Tell yourself this unceasingly and realise it. Try not to know that you work.
>
> Do all as a sacrifice to the Lord. Be in the world, but not of it, like the lotus leaf whose roots are in the mud but which remains always pure. Let your love go to all, whatever they do to you. A blind man cannot see colour, so how can we see evil unless it is in us? We compare what we see outside with what we find in ourselves and pronounce judgement accordingly. If we are pure, we cannot see impurity. It may exist. But not for us. See only God in every man, woman and child; see it by the antarjyotis, "Inner Light", and seeing that, we can see naught else. Do not want this world, because what you desire you get. Seek the Lord and the Lord only. The more there is, the more bondage, the more fear. How much more afraid and miserable are we than the ant! Get out of it and come to the Lord. Seek the science of the maker and not that of the made.[2]

Not to blindly accept anything as good and worthy to be followed but to judge it endlessly till one is convinced of the truth and goodness inherent in it is the key to Vivekananda's philosophy of aesthetics in humanism. His own sense of aesthetic vision never allows anything to be accepted as the last truth since all truth is related to the well-being of humanity. As truth is closely related to goodness and *vice versa*, the beauty of truth is always the outcome of goodness that adorns every thought and action, contemplation and perfection.

The vision of serene humanism is as Vivekananda emphasises, to make us realise the presence of the Kingdom of God within and involve ourselves in glorious humanistic endeavour. This prophetic vision alone can make us aware of the mighty soul in everyone of us that prompts to tear off all bondage of fear, shame, dishonesty and disappointment. Like an ever caressing aesthetic teacher, he vibrantly inspires us to take up the challenge of life like a boat on the shores of the tempest of the sea and courageously negotiate all constraints till the goal is achieved:

> Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and bad actions—a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-raging, ever-rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect; a little moth placed under the wheel of causation which rolls on crushing everything in its way and waits not for the widow's tears or the orphan's cry? The heart sinks at the idea, yet this is the law of Nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?—was the cry that went up from the heart of despair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the great tidings: "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! Even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion, knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again." "Children of immortal bliss"—what a sweet, what a hopeful name! * * * Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth-sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing

> libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.[3]

Vivekananda strongly advocates that the religion of humanism is practically the religion of aesthetics. It is that humanism which always heralds the spirit of goodness even under trying circumstances. Thus human relationship is always guaranteed by a sombre sense of the aesthetics of goodness that never allows anyone to inflict injury to others under any circumstances.

Seeing God in man and loving man as the embodiment of All Love are the fundamental components of human ascent and excellence. Vivekananda in his philosophy of aesthetics that promotes humanism ennobles the spirit of love that makes man endear man. This is the religion of man that glorifies the Divinity inherent in every man. As he characteristically elucidates:

> If you cannot see God in the human face, how can you see Him in the clouds, or in images, made of dull, dead matter, or in mere fictitious stories of our brain? I shall call you religious from the day you begin to see God in men and women, and then you will understand what is meant by turning the left cheek to the man who strikes you on the right. When you see man as God, everything, even the tiger, will be welcome. Whatever comes to you is but the Lord, the Eternal, the Blessed One, appearing to us in various forms, as our father, and mother, and friend, and child—they are our own soul playing with us.
>
> As our human relationships can thus be made divine, so our relationship with God may take any of these forms and we can look upon Him as our father, or mother, or friend, or beloved. Calling God Mother is a higher ideal than calling Him Father; and to call Him Friend is still higher; but the highest is to regard Him as the Beloved.

> The highest point of all is to see no difference between lover and beloved. You may remember, perhaps, the old Persian story, of how a lover came and knocked at the door of the beloved and was asked, "Who are you?" He answered, "It is I", and there was no response. A second time he came, and exclaimed, "I am here", but the door was not opened. The third time he came, and the voice asked from inside, "Who is there?" He replied, "I am thyself, my beloved", and the door opened. So is the relation between God and ourselves. He is everything. Every man and woman is the palpable, blissful, living God. Who says God is unknown? Who says He is the searched after? We have found God eternally. We have been living in Him eternally; everywhere He is eternally known, eternally worshipped.[4]

Knowing truth as Vivekananda strongly asserts, is to be in close association with humankind. Unless truth is discovered, man remains undiscovered, unknown, unidentified as an inseparable part of the All True. When he speaks of oneness of man and God, he makes a bridge between man and God through truth. The concept of Atman—the eternal light of the Self—is impossible unless it is based on truth and when it is based on truth it proclaims the vision of man the divine. Moreover, all knowledge, all truth lead to One Existence, One Soul. The concept of Atman based on the concept of truth as such vibrantly asserts the role of humanism as an expression of the aesthetic component of truth. When he speaks of doing good to others instead of injuring none, we enter into this world of truth—the truth of loving others and living in identity with God, the Eternal Humanist.

Vivekananda exposes this humanistic and aesthetic vision of the All Serene very adroitly in explaining how Vedanta leads us to identify and discover the sentient being in each one of us always caressing and disseminating the spirit of truth that cares for the well being of others. This is the way to understand the Infinite Being within oneself caring for the good of others. Then every individual is freed from selfishness or self-assertion and devotes to the progress of truth that paves path to the welfare of others. As Vivekananda appositely justifies:

> "Know the truth and be free in a moment". All the darkness will then vanish. When man has seen himself as one with the Infinite Being of the universe, when all separateness is ceased, when all men and women, all Gods and angels, all animals and plants, and the whole universe have melted that Oneness, then all fear disappears. Can I hurt myself? Can I kill myself? Can I injure myself? Whom to fear? Can you fear yourself? Then will all sorrow disappear. What can cause me sorrow? I am the one Existence of the universe. Then all jealousies will disappear; of whom to be jealous? Of myself? Then all bad feelings disappear. Against whom can I have bad feeling? Against myself? There is none in the universe but I. And this is the one way, says the Vedanta, to knowledge. Kill out this differentiation, kill out this superstition that there are many. "He who in this world of many sees that One, he who in this mass of insentiency sees that one Sentient Being, he who in this world of shadows catches that Reality unto him belongs eternal peace, unto none else, unto none else."

* * * * * *

Why is it that everyone says, "Do good to others?" Where is the explanation? Why is it that all great men have preached the brotherhood of mankind, and greater men, the brotherhood of all lives? Because whether they were conscious of it or not, behind all that, through all their irrational and personal superstitions, was peering forth the eternal life of the self-denying all manifoldness, and assuring that the whole universe is but one.

Again, the last word gave us one universe, which through the senses we see as matter, through the intellect as souls, and through the spirit as God. To the man who throws upon himself veils, which the world calls wickedness and evil, this very universe will change and become a hideous place; to another man who wants enjoyments, this very universe will change its appearance and become a heaven, and to the perfect man the whole thing will vanish and become his own self.

* * * * * *

Injure none, deny the position to none; take man where he stands and, if you can, lead him a helping hand and put him on a higher platform but do not injure and do not destroy. All will come to truth in the long run. "When all the desires of the heart will be vanquished, this very mortal will become immortal"—then the very man will become God.[5]

The aesthetics of love, which is one of the most significant components of humanism, forms the basic tenet of Vivekananda's philosophy of man. When he speaks of the living God, he reminds us of the fact that God is man. To make ceaseless strivings for elimination of fear by strengthening oneself with the spirit of the Atman is to make an entry into the serene and harmonious world of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. Then only one can have the power of aesthetic self-efflorescence that enables one to eliminate the little "I" and glorify the real "I" that merges in the eternal universe of oneness.

The All Beautiful in oneself always awaits the emancipation of one not isolated from others but born and reborn in the weal and woe of each and every person in and around one. Then alone one can have the great aesthetic vision of the unison between man and God. Then alone can one visualise that through elimination of ignorance one can have the true assessment of oneself that is always the embodiment of the Supreme Self. In this connection one cannot but recall Vivekananda's illuminating illustration:

> Two birds sat on the tree. The bird at the top was calm, majestic, beautiful, perfect. The lower bird was always hopping from twig to twig, now eating sweet fruits and being happy, now eating bitter fruits and being miserable. One day, when he had eaten a fruit more bitter than usual,

> he glanced up at the calm, majestic upper bird and thought, "How I would like to be like him!" and he hopped up a little way towards him. Soon he forgot all about his desire to be like the upper bird, and went on as before, eating sweet and bitter fruits and being happy and miserable. Again he looked up, again he went up a little nearer to the calm and majestic upper bird; the brilliancy of his plumage dazzled him, seemed to absorb him, and finally, to his wonder and surprise, he found that there was only one bird—he was the upper bird all the time and had but just found it out. Man is like that lower bird but if he perseveres in his efforts to rise to the highest ideal he can conceive of, he too will find that he was the self all the time and the other was but a dream.[6]

The making of unison between the little self and the Divine self within oneself as Vivekananda always reminds us, is the making of perfection already within oneself. How to find the good in oneself in order to find out the good in others and *vice-versa*? How to make oneself prepared for making a journey within oneself in order to make a quest for the aesthetics of goodness? These are not easy questions to solve unless one is involved with the vision of what makes man really a man.

Vivekananda considers man from the standpoint of goodness which contributes a lot to the advancement of humanism. As a matter of fact, this is the religion that he considers to be the religion of all religions. This is the religion in which God is to be realised and worshipped. The vision of God the Beautiful emanates only when the vision of goodness is considered to be the man's forte.

Apart from making an adventure into the theories, rites and principles of religion which Vivekananda considers to be a matter of secondary importance primarily from the point of view of the aesthetics of humanism, what is to be followed and disseminated in the religion of man is to find out the inherent beauty of man—the beauty that always adorns goodness. When we accept this vision of aesthetics as the fundamental component of humanism, we endear

Vivekananda's approach to good and evil, which are nothing but relative terms. What we consider to be good is never unrelated to evil and what we consider to be evil is never unrelated to goodness. The fact that goodness and evil always await crystallisation and re-crystallisation points to exercise of humanism. Such an exercise can be sometimes ambiguous, trying, struggling and painstaking but that exercise alone will allow us to negotiate the evil with that sense of goodness which allows us to encounter the Personal God:

> There are good and evil in this world. Sometimes evil becomes good, true; but other times good becomes evil also. All our senses produce evil sometime or other. Let a man drink wine. It is bad [at first], but let him go on drinking, [and] it will produce evil . . . . A man is born of rich parents; good enough. He becomes a fool, never exercises his body or brain. That is good producing evil. Think of this of life; we go away and jump about and live a few moments; we work hard. We are born babies, entirely incapable. It takes us years to understand things again. At sixty or seventy we open our eyes; and then comes the word "Get out"! And there you are.
>
> We have seen that good and bad are relative terms. The thing [that is] good for me is bad for you. If you eat the dinner that I eat, you will begin to weep, and I shall laugh. . . . We [may] both dance, but I with joy and you with pain. . . . The same thing is good at one part of life and bad at another part. How can you say [that] good and evil are all evil?
>
> Now, who is responsible for all this good and evil, if God is ever the good? The Christians and the Mohammedans say there is a gentleman called *Satan*. How can you say there are two gentlemen working? There must be one. . . the fire that burns the child also cooks the meal. How can you call the fire good or bad, and how can you say it was created by two different persons? Who creates all [so-called] evil? God. There is no other way out. He sends death and life, plague and epidemics, and

> everything. If such is God, He is the good; He is the evil; He is the beautiful; He is the terrible; He is life; He is death.[7]

The quest for perfection is always a quest within—a quest that prepares one to find out the essence of humanism well crystallised in the untiring striving for refinement by means of exercising aesthetic sensibilities. This is a quest that does not allow one to welcome evil and banish good but crystallise all evil sensibilities with the best and the noblest spirit of humane enlightenment. Vivekananda draws our attention to stick to aesthetic refinement of sensibilities in all our actions and thoughts so that the spirit of humanism gets an added and desirable spurt to visualise the All Beautiful in everyone in our quest for perfection. Therefore, the education of exercising the aesthetic component of goodness for one and all is the prime need of the hour to justify each and every one of us as good and pure:

> We only get what we deserve. It is a lie when we say, the world is bad and we are good. It can never be so. It is a terrible lie we tell ourselves. This is the first lesson to learn: be determined not to curse anything outside, not to lay the blame upon anyone outside, but be a man, stand up, lay the blame on yourself. You will find that is always true. Get hold of yourself.
>
> We are to take care of ourselves—that much we can do—and give up attending to others, for a time. Let us perfect the means, the end will take care of itself. For the world can be good and pure, only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect, and we are the means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves.[8]

Purity in thought and action is what Swami Vivekananda considers to be one of the most important aesthetic components of human excellence and ascent. As such, he considers sticking to purity, to be the most essential end-in-view of humane development. One who always sticks to purity at all cost never allows evil thoughts to win over good ones. Such an adherence to purity of thoughts becomes for one an abiding and perennial force to eliminate all vibrations of evil thoughts from the mind and allows one to continually strive for the goodness of all human beings without caring for the self.

Any endeavour at aesthetic devotion in order to be justified to human goodness demands a spiritual ascent of all our good thoughts. Vivekananda suggests to refine all good and evil thoughts to be justified to the self as well as to humanity. This demands an understanding, appreciation and apposite utilisation of each and every wave, as it were, of illustrious personalities who always sacrificed themselves for the cause of others. Therein lies the wonderland of aesthetic spiritualism.

Vivekananda also inspires us to practise and follow the path of purity and love because this is not merely a path of aesthetic exercise but it is essentially one of fullness of man. The waves of aesthetic purity that we encounter in course of understanding, appreciating and utilising the noble visions of great aesthetic thinkers like the Buddha, Christ and others imbibe in us that sense of aesthetic advancement through which we can crystallise and re-crystallise our good thoughts and noble intentions for the goodness of every human being. Vivekananda's own interpretation on this point is very significant:

> Good and evil thoughts are each a potent power, and they fill the universe. As vibration continues, so thought remains in the form of thought until translated into action. For example, force is latent in the man's arm until he strikes a blow, when he translates it into activity. We are the heir of good and evil thought. If we make ourselves pure, and the instruments of good thoughts, these will enter us. The good soul will not be receptive to evil thoughts. Evil thoughts find the best field in evil people: they are microbes which germinate and increase only when they find a suitable soil. Mere thoughts are like little wavelets; fresh impulses to vibration come to them simultaneously, until at last one great wave seems to stand up and swallow

> up the rest. These universal thought waves seem to recur every five hundred years, when invariably the great wave typifies and swallows up the others. It is this which constitutes a prophet. He focuses in his own mind the thought of the age in which he is living and gives it back to mankind in concrete form. Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and Luther may be instanced as the great waves that stood up above their fellows (with a probable lapse of five hundred years between them). Always the wave that is backed by the greatest purity and noblest character is what breaks upon the world as a movement of social reform. Once again in our day there is a vibration of waves of thought and the central idea is that of the Immanent God, and this is everywhere cropping up in every form and every sect. In these waves, construction alternates with destruction; yet the construction always makes an end of the work of destruction. Now, as a man dives deeper to reach his spiritual nature, he feels no longer bound by superstition. The majority of sects will be transient, and last only as bubbles because the leaders are not usually men of character, this is what builds character. There is no allegiance possible where there is no character in the leader, and perfect purity ensures the most lasting allegiance and confidence.[9]

To explore and expand the aesthetic world of fineness in everything, every thought, every action and every humane endeavour is to be in perfect tune with the great aesthetic spirit of Vivekananda's philosophy of humanism. As a matter of fact, he makes us inspired to make an unending quest for what is fine and purify our thoughts and actions with all dedication to purity and fineness in the four-fold manner.

First, we should have the primary end-in-view of strengthening our aesthetic vision by means of strengthening our spiritual personality.

Second, for such an endeavour, we should always have a clear and undisputed acceptance of the superiority of the spirit to the grossness of the body.

Third, we should be more interested in the enrichment of the internal self than that of the outer or external self.

Fourth, we should always have the thirst for making an endless quest for the finest in order to encounter the All Beautiful who is within us and waits for serene manifestation in a world of eternal goodness.

Why does Vivekananda give emphasis on ceaseless striving for the finest efflorescence of everything by every mind? The answer is easy. Each pure mind of every individual will contribute to the creation of the great one Mind that merges in the All Beautiful. What greater worth of man as man does any aesthetically conscious human being deserve? When purity and morality are wedded together in the spirit of aesthetic fineness, the identity of man as a champion of humane sensibilities manifests in the best possible manner. Vivekananda's own elucidation on this delicate issue of aesthetics in humanistic endeavour is remarkable:

> There are laws, very fine, which are behind the physical law, as we know. That is to say, there are no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a spiritual world. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of tapering existence; the thickest part is here; it tapers, and becomes finer and finer. The finest is what we call spirit. The grossest, the body. And just as it is here in microcosm, it is exactly the same in macrocosm. The universe of ours is exactly like that; it is the gross external thickness and it tapers into something finer and finer until it becomes God.
>
> We also know that the greatest power is lodged in the fine, not in the coarse. We see a man take up a huge weight, we see his muscles swell, and over his body we see signs of exertion, and we think that the muscles are powerful things. But it is the thin thread-like things, the nerves which bring power to the muscles; the moment one of these threads is cut off from reaching the muscles, they are not able to work at all. These tiny nerves bring the power from something still finer, and that again in its turn

> brings it from something finer still—thought and so on. So, it is the fine that is really the seat of power. Of course we can see the movements in the gross; but when fine movements take place, we catch it, and thus we naturally identify movement with things which are gross. But all the power is really in the fine. We do not see any movement in the fine, perhaps, because the movement is so intense that we cannot perceive it. But if by any science, any investigation, we are helped to get hold of these finer forces which are the cause of the expression, the expression itself will be under control. There is a little bubble coming from the bottom of a lane; we do not see it coming all the time, we see it only when it bursts on the surface; so we can perceive thoughts only after they develop a great deal or after they become actions. We constantly complain that we have no control over our actions, over our thoughts. But how can we have it? If we can get control over the fine movements, if we can get hold of thought, before it has become action, then it would be possible for us to control the whole. Now, if there is a method by which we can analyse, investigate, understand, and finally grapple with those finer powers, the finer causes, then alone is it possible to have control over ourselves, and the man who has control over his own mind assuredly will have control over every other mind. That is why purity and morality have been always the object of religion; a pure, moral man has control of himself. And all minds are the same, different parts of one Mind. He who knows one lump of clay has known all the clay of the universe. He who knows and controls his own mind knows the secret of every mind and has power over every mind.[10]

The identification of humanism in terms of aesthetics as Vivekananda highlights above also refers to our knowledge of the Atman, which is always an embodiment of *vyashti* or the assembly of the components of all aesthetic and humanised visions. The spirit of renunciation which truly represents the religion of man is one which steers us towards unison with the All Good. None can find the right road to encounter the

All Good. Unless devotion to the aesthetic component of renunciation becomes a part and parcel of one's very being, then alone one can have a true vision of the co-existence of God and man in all aesthetic grandeur. In analysing the true concept of God in terms of man, Vivekananda stresses on the aesthetic spirit of renunciation to be followed and practised by everyone till one encounters the vision of the All Good in every human being:

> "Know the Atman alone, and give up all other vain words". This is the only knowledge we gain from all the knowing about the universe. This is the only work, to call upon mankind to "Awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached". It is renunciation, *Tyaga*, that is meant by religion, and nothing else.
>
> *Ishwara* is the sum-total of individuals; yet He Himself also is an individual in the same way as the human body is a unit, of which each cell is an individual. *Samasthi* or the Collection is *God*. *Vyashti* or the component is the soul of *Jiva*. The existence of *Ishwara*, therefore, depends on that of *Jiva*, as the body on the cell, and *vice versa*. *Jiva* and *Ishwara* are co-existent beings. As long as the one exists, the other also must. Again, since in all the higher spheres, except in our earth, the amount of good is vastly in excess of the amount of bad, the sum-total or *Ishwara* may be said to be All-Good, Almighty, and Omniscient. These are obvious qualities, and need no argument to prove, from the very fact of totality.[11]

The concept of religion in terms of the aesthetics of humanism as Swami Vivekananda idealises and disseminates, opens a new vista of human ascent and excellence. In fact, no aesthetic visionary has suggested the aesthetics of religion in the same liberalised and humanised patterns of the desirable evolution of religion best suited to the finer and nobler vision of man. Undeniably, his vision necessitates a bold step to translate every religion as a unique passport to understand and appreciate the aesthetics of humanism where love and sacrifice, goodness and welfare of all eliminate the trivial self-interest of health, wealth, happiness and so on. Vivekananda identifies such religion of self-interest as 'shopkeeping religion' which tarnishes the aesthetic vision of the religion of man. Explaining his view-point he categorically remarks:

> The final idea is that my religion cannot be yours, or yours mine. Although the goal and the aim are the same, yet each one has to take a different road, according to the tendencies of his mind; and although these roads are various, they must all be true, because they lead to the same goal. It cannot be that one is true and the rest not. The choosing of one's own road is called in the language of Bhakti, Ishta, the chosen way.

* * * * *

Every religion has prayers, but one thing you must bear in mind—praying for health or wealth is not Bhakti, it is all Karma or meritorious action. Praying for anything physical gain is simply Karma, such as a prayer for going to heaven and so forth. One that wants to love God, to be Bhakta, must discard all such prayers. He who wants to enter the realms of light must first give up this buying and selling, this 'shopkeeping' religion and then enter the gates. It is not that you do not get what you pray for. You get everything, but such praying is a beggar's religion. "Foolish indeed is he who, living on the banks of the Ganga, digs a little well for water. A fool indeed is the man who coming to mine of diamonds seeks for glass-beads." This body will die sometime, so what is the use of praying for its health again and again? What is there in health and wealth? The wealthiest man can use and enjoy only a little portion of his wealth. We can never get all the things of the world; and if not, who cares? This body will go, who cares for these things? If good things come, welcome; if they go away, let them go. Blessed are they when they come, and blessed are they when they go. We are striving to come into the presence of the King of kings.[12]

Existence-Knowledge-Bliss are the trio of Vivekananda's viewpoints on the aesthetics of humanism. If there is no feeling of existence on one's part in the best way as possible for the good of others, the idea of humanism as one cherishes terribly suffers. Again, if the knowledge as one possesses does not endorse one's extinction of personality, it simply fails to justify humanity. Moreover, whatever knowledge one receives in course of one's earnest endeavour cannot but be geared to the goodness of others. Then only one can have the heavenly bliss, the association of the All Good who is within one and waits for apposite emancipation. A real Bhakta or a pursuer of the All Good cannot but make a happy cohesion among existence, knowledge and bliss and at the same time harbour within oneself the quality of extinction of personality.

What, then, is the sum-total of Vivekananda's philosophy of synchronisation between aesthetics and humanism? The answer can be given in his own words written in the poem To a Friend:

Where darkness is interpreted as light,
Where misery passes for happiness,
Where disease is pretended to be the health,
Where the new-born's cry but shows 'tis alive,
Dost thou, O wise, expect happiness here?

Where war and competition ceaseless run,
Even the father turns against the son,
Where 'self', 'self'—this always the only note,
Dost thou, O wise, seek for peace supreme here?

A glaring mixture of heaven and hell
Who can fly from this Sansar of Maya?
Fastened in the neck with Karma's fetters
Say, where can the slave escape for safety?

* * * *

Let go your vain reliance on knowledge,
Let go your prayers, offerings, and strength,

For Love selfless is the only resource;—
Lo, the insects teach, embracing the flame!

The base insect's blind, by beauty charmed,
Thy soul is drunken with the wine of Love;
O thou Lover true, cast into the fire
All thy dress of self, thy mean selfishness.

Say—comes happiness e'er to a beggar?
What good being object of charity?
Give away, ne'er turn to ask in return,
Should there be the wealth treasured in thy heart.

Ay, born heir to the Infinite thou art
Within the heart is the ocean of Love,
"Give", "Give away"—whoever asks return,
His ocean dwindles down to a mere drop.

From highest Brahman to the yonder worm,
And to the very minutest atom,
Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love;
Friend, offer mind, soul, body, at their feet.[13]

Are we solemnly prepared for the above?

References

1. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, 1989, Vol. II, p. 365.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 63-64.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 10-11.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 326-27.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 251-53.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 4 -5.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 53-54.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 9.
9. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 134-35.
10. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 15-16.
11. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 385.
12. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 36-38.
13. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 493-96.

6

Humanism and Mysticism: Vivekananda's Introspection

The world of mysticism is the world of beyonding of consciousness. It is a world in which humanism finds the highest essence of the promise and perfection of man. Apparently, man as man remains isolated from the vision of the All Beautiful. But when one devotes oneself to become mystic, one really enters into a New World of inner consciousness where one merges into the Infinite. Then the All Beautiful also finds in one the perfect aura of efflorescence.

As a mystic visionary, Vivekananda does not exert any rigorous path either to accept or to follow for fulfilment of mystic consciousness. But deep down in his heart he distinctly feels that the stream of mystic renunciation always beckons one to be a permanent partner to the voidless void as he categorically identifies mysticism in one of his poems and makes it a significant component in the pursuit of samadhi. Who can have the right vision of samadhi? Vivekananda's "The Hymn of Samadhi" appositely suggests the mystic vision of humanism:

> Lo! The sun is not, nor the calmly moon,
> All light extinct; in the great void of space

> Floats shadow—like the image-universe.
> In the void of mind involute, there floats
> The fleeting universe, rises and floats,
> Sinks again, ceaseless, in the current "I".
>
> Slowly, slowly, the shadow-multitude
> Entered the primal womb, and flowed ceaseless,
> The only current, the "I am", "I am".
>
> Lo! 'Tis stopped, ev'n that current flows no more,
> Void merged into void—beyond speech and mind!
> Whose heart understands, he verily does.[1]

Vivekananda's vision of love is actually the vision of man, the mystic exponent of the All Serene. He highlights his mystic vision of man in terms of the All Serene and *vice versa*. In fact, love is an abiding and inspiring spirit within man who represents the All Serene. This is why to him love turns into Love Infinite, the love that glorifies both man and the All Serene as one and the same:

> Unless there is love, philosophy becomes dry bones, psychology becomes a sort of [theory], and work becomes mere labour. [If there is love], philosophy becomes poetry, psychology becomes [mysticism], and work the most delicious thing in creation. [By merely] reading books [one] becomes barren. Who becomes learned? He who can feel even one drop of love. God is love, and love is God. And God is everywhere. After seeing that God is everywhere, one does not know whether one stands on one's head or [on one's] feet—like a man who gets a bottle of wine and does not know where one stands. . . . If we weep ten minutes for God, we will not know where we are for the next two months. . . . We will not remember the times for meals. We will not know what we are eating.

* * * * * * *

Judge people not. They are all mad. Children are [mad] after their games, the young after the young, the old [are] chewing the cud of their past years; some are mad after gold. Why not some after God? Go crazy over the love of God as you go crazy over Johns and Janes. Who are they? [People] will say, "Shall I give up this? Shall I give up that?" One asked, "Shall I give up marriage?" Do not give up anything! Things will give you up. Wait and you will forget them.[2]

To make an adventure into the world of mysticism is to make oneself prepared to serve humans under any circumstances. Constraints and confrontations do not bother one who really knows that the road to self-denial and self-sacrifice is the only road to self-illumination and beyonding of consciousness. Then alone one discards all natural obstacles. Then alone one can have the true idea of what goodness is. Vivekananda elucidates this vision of self-denial and self-sacrifice from the mystic vision of self-advancement in terms of freedom and encounter with the "Truth Ultimate" as a consequence of the fusion between man and God:

> If we are ever to gain freedom, it must be by conquering nature, never by running away. Cowards never win victories. We have to fight fear and troubles and ignorance if we expect them to before us.
>
> What is death? What are terrors? Do you not see the Lord's face in them? Fly from evil and terror and misery, and they will follow you. Face them, and they will flee. The whole world worships ease and pleasure, and very few dare to worship which is painful. To rise above both is the idea of freedom. Unless one passes through this gate, he cannot be free. We will have to face these. We strive to worship the Lord, but the body rises between, nature rises between Him and us and blinds our vision. We must learn how to worship and love Him in the thunderbolt, in shame, in sorrow, in sin. All the world has ever been preaching the God of virtue. I preach a God of virtue and a God of sin in one. Take Him if you dare—that is the only way to salvation; then alone will come to us the "Truth Ultimate"

> which comes from the idea of oneness. Then will be lost the idea that one is greater than another. The nearer we approach the law of freedom, the more we shall come under the Lord, and troubles will vanish. Then we shall not differentiate the door of hell from the gate of heaven, nor differentiate between men and say, "I am greater than any being in the universe". Until we see nothing in the world but the Lord Himself, all these evils will beset us and we shall make all these distinctions; because it is only in the Lord, in the Spirit, that we are all one; and until we see God everywhere, this unity will not exist for us.[3]

How can we merge ourselves into the voidless void as Vivekananda would always remind us of the true mystic vision of humanism? How can we see nothing in the world except the vision of the All Beautiful? The only answer is to understand the true nature of man, the Purusha as the true emancipation of man. When man, soul and Purusha make a fusion, the vision of man, the Divine Being finds the best manifestation of the All Beautiful. Elucidating the role of Purusha as a unit of unison for all our perceptions and sensations and the soul as the unifying component of our perceptions, Vivekananda refers to the mystic vision of a Yogi who knows how to eliminate ignorance through Purusha which is always beyond any principle of causation:

> It is the real nature of man, the soul, the Purusha, which is beyond all law of causation. Its freedom is percolating through layers of matter in various forms, intelligence, mind, etc. It is its light that is shining through all. Intelligence has no light of its own. Each organ has a particular centre in the brain; it is not that all the organs have one centre; each organ is separate. Why do all perceptions harmonise? Where do they get their unity? If it were the brain, it would be necessary for all the organs, the eyes, the nose, the ears, etc., to have one centre only, while we know for certain that there are different centres for each. Both a man can see and hear the same

> time, so a unity must be there at the back of intelligence. Intelligence is connected with the brain, but behind intelligence even stands the Purusha, the unit, where all different sensations and perceptions join and become one. The soul itself is the centre where all the different perceptions converge and become unified. The soul is free, and it is its freedom that tells you every moment that you are free. But you mistake, and mingle that freedom with intelligence and mind. You try to attribute that freedom to the intelligence, and immediately find that intelligence is not free; you attribute that freedom to the body, and immediately nature tells you that you are again mistaken. That is why there is this mingled sense of freedom and bondage at the same time. The Yogi analyses both what is free and what is bound, and his ignorance vanishes. He finds that the Purusha is free, is the essence of that knowledge which, coming through the Buddhi, becomes intelligence, and, as such, is bound.[4]

To make inroads to humanism by means of the mystic aroma of fullness that paves path to the essence of perfect non-attachment, Vivekananda encourages us to reduce ourselves to a cipher. This will enable us to realise in our heart of hearts the fact that all we do and serve others is actually done by the mystic force of the All Serene in ourselves. We simply carry out the orders of the infinite spirit inherent in everyone of us. If we feel and act so in the mystico-humanistic vision of excellence and ascent, death becomes an insignificant matter and the most valuable dividend we earn is perfect freedom. Goodness then becomes a part and parcel of our very being. We can then make a fusion between the soul and the self, which can be made only by the highest men. What an enrichment of humanism through mystic fulfilment! When Vivekananda highlights the goal of Karma-Yoga, he refers to this mystico-humanistic fulfilment of man in terms of perfect freedom:

> The highest men cannot work, for in them there is no attachment. Those whose whole soul is gone into the *Self*,

> those whose desires are confined in the *Self*, who have become ever associated with the *Self*, for them there is no work. Such are indeed the highest of mankind; but apart from them every one else has to work. In so working we should never think that we can help on even the last thing in this universe. We cannot. We only help ourselves in this gymnasium of the world. This is the proper attitude of work. If we work in this way, if we always remember that our present opportunity to work thus is a privilege which has been given to us, we shall never be attached to anything. Millions like you and me think that we are great people in the world; but we all die, and in five minutes the world forgets us. But the life of God is infinite. "Who can live a moment, breathe a moment, if this all-powerful One does not will it?" He is the ever active Providence. All power is His and within His command. Through His command the winds blow, the sun shines, the earth lives, and death stalks upon the earth. He is the all in all; He is all and in all. We can only worship Him. Give up all fruits of work; do good for its own sake; then alone will come perfect non-attachment. The bonds of the heart will thus break, and we shall reap perfect freedom. This freedom is indeed the goal of Karma-Yoga.[5]

The cohesion of chitta, buddhi, manas and indriyas that represent the mindstuff, the mind, the faculty of determination and sense-organs respectively present us with the true vision of humanism as a mystic efflorescence of man. Vivekananda always refers to the internal world of the Self in man the only guiding force that leads man to fullness of humanistic endeavour. Why not, then, turn ourselves into a cipher? Why not raise ourselves from worldly attractions and temptations? Vivekananda's own mystic vision on this point is significant:

> The seer is really the Self, the pure one, the ever holy, the infinite, the immortal. This is the Self of man. And what are the instruments? The Chitta or mind-stuff. The Buddhi or determinative faculty, the Manas or mind,

> and the Indriyas or sense-organs. These are the instruments for him to see the external world, and the significance of the Self with the instruments is what is called the ignorance of egoism. We say, "I am the mind", "I am thought", "I am hungry", or "I am happy". How can we be angry and how can we hate? We should identify ourselves with the Self that cannot change. If it is unchangeable, how can it be one moment happy, and one moment unhappy? It is formless, infinite, omnipresent. What can change it? It is beyond all laws. What can affect it? Nothing in the universe can produce an effect on it. Yet through ignorance, we identify ourselves with the mind-stuff, and think we feel pleasure and pain.[6]

The discovery of the self in terms of mysticism as Swami Vivekananda elicits, is the discovery of love. Unless it is identified with love, humanism becomes a matter of abstraction, a myth or a search in vain for unison with the All Beautiful who is always awaiting effulgence in our depth of the vision of fullness of man. When Vivekananda advises us to become crazy or mad for the love of God, he earnestly suggests for looking upon the fusion of love and God, which is infinite, eternal and full of the promise, and poignance of extinction of the self as one most significant component of mysticism. In his own words:

> Who becomes learned? He who can feel even one drop of love. God is love, and love is God. And God is everywhere. After seeing that God is love and God is everywhere, one does whether one stands on one's head or [on one's] feet— like a man who gets a bottle of wine and does not know where one stands . . . . If we weep ten minutes for God, we will not know where we are for the next two months . . . . We will not remember the times for meals. We will not know what we are eating. [How can] you love God and always be so nice and business-like?

* * * *

> Judge people not. They are all mad. Children are [mad] after their games, the young after the young, the old [are] chewing the cud of their past years; some are mad after gold. Why not some after God? Go crazy over the love of God as you go crazy over Johns and Janes. Who are they? [People] will say, "Shall I give up this? Shall I give up that?" one asked, "Shall I give up marriage?" Do not give up anything! Things will give you up. Wait and you will forget them.[7]

The spirit of unison of the little I with the Divine Self in oneself is the highest spirit of extinction of personality. It is this spirit that promises everyone of us to rise above all narrowness of mind and outlook. It is that spirit, again, which shows us the avenue of the beyonding of consciousness—the grand avenue of emancipation of the self to be prized with the mystic vision of "I am He". Elucidating the strength of this mystic vision of humanism, Vivekananda adroitly observes:

> Strength, strength it is that we want so much in this life, for what we call sin and sorrow have one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes ignorance and with ignorance comes misery. It will make us strong. Then miseries will be laughed at, then the violence of the will be smiled at, and the ferocious tiger will reveal, behind its tiger's nature, my own self. That will be the result. The soul is strong that has become one with the Lord; none else is strong. In your own Bible, what do you think was the cause of that strength of Jesus of Nazareth, that immense, infinite strength which laughed at traitors, and blessed those that were willing to murder him? It was that, "I am my Father and one"; it was that prayer, "Father, just I am one with you, so make them all one with me". That is the worship of the Impersonal God. Be one with the universe, be one with Him. And this Impersonal God requires no demonstrations, no proofs. He is nearer to us than even our senses, nearer to us than our own thoughts; it is in and through Him that we see and think. To see anything, I must first see Him. To see this wall, I first see

> Him, and then the wall, for He is the eternal subject. Who is seeing whom? He is here in the heart of our hearts. Bodies and minds change; misery, happiness, good and evil come and go; days and years roll on; life comes and goes; but He does not. The same voice, "I am, I am", is eternal, unchangeable. In Him and through Him we know everything. In Him and through Him we see everything. In Him and through Him we sense, we think, we live, and we are. And that "I", which we mistake to be a little "I", limited, is not only my "I", but yours, the "I" of every one, of the animals, of the angels, of the lowest of the lowliest of he low. That "I am" is the same in the murderer as in the saint, the same in the rich as in the poor, the same in man as in woman, the same in man as in animals. From the lowliest amoeba to the highest angel, He resides in every soul, and eternally declares, "I am He". When we have understood that voice eternally present there, when we have learnt this lesson, the whole universe will have expressed its secret.[8]

As a mystic visionary, Vivekananda comes closer to humanity than mere making inroads to either ethics or religion. As such, his philosophy of humanism is concerned with the God in man, "The living God" as he reminds us. The cosmology of consciousness with which he ventilates his vision of mysticism breathes a gentle and serene air of humane sensibilities. Which is why he cares more for the living God in man than for God as a religious force or dogma as one likes to think or express. He also delves deep into the yearnings of man to come out of the little cocoon of the self and make a grand journey towards the Holy Grail of human consciousness. As he unfolds the concept of the living God:

> He who is in you and outside you,
> Who works through all hands,
> Who walks on all feet,
> Whole body are all ye,
> Him worship and break all other idols!

He who is at once the high and low,
The sinner and the saint,
Both God and worm,
Him worship—visible, knowable, real, omnipresent,
Break all other idols!

In whom is neither past life
Nor future birth nor death,
In whom we always have been
And always shall be one,
Him worship. Break all other idols!

Ye fools! who neglect the living God,
And His infinite reflections with which the world is full
While ye run after imaginary shadows,
That lead alone to fights and quarrels,
Him worship, the only visible!
Break all other idols![9]

Elsewhere, Vivekananda expresses his deep sense of mystic humanism in "An Interesting Correspondence" where he makes an elegant fusion between aesthetics and mystic vision of humankind where the mystic vision of man is resounded with the spirit of the beyonding of consciousness:

The beauteous earth, the glorious sun,
The calm sweet moon, the spangled sky,
Causation's laws do make them run;
They live in bonds, in bonds they die.

And mind its mantle dreamy net
Cast o'er them all and holds them fast,
In warp and woof of thought are set
Earth, hells, and heavens, or worst or best.

Know these are but the outer crust-
All space and time, all effect, cause,
I am beyond all sense of thoughts,
The witness of the universe.[10]

The spirit of the beyonding of man as Swami Vivekananda highlights in his mystic philosophy of humanism heralds the glory of man as a harbinger of humane and at the same time heavenly mystico-aesthetic fulfilment. He feels in his heart of hearts that every man must submit to the All Beautiful who is within us, around us and beyond everyone of us and who all the time shows us how to endear, sustain and transfuse into the Light of Love. In his own invaluable words:

> When one loves the Lord, the whole universe becomes dear to one, because it is all His. "Everything is His, and He is my Lover; I love Him", says the Bhakta. In this way everything becomes sacred to the Bhakta, because all things are His. How, then, may we hurt anyone? How, then, may we not love another? With the love of God will come, as its effect, the love of everyone in the long run. The nearer we approach God, the more do we begin to see that all things abide in Him, our heart will become a perennial fountain of love. Man is transformed in the presence of this Light of Love and realises at last the beautiful and inspiring truth that Love, Lover and the Beloved are really one.[11]

Do we strive for the fusion of humanism and mysticism as above?

References

1. Swami Vivekananda:"The Hymn of Samadhi", *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, 1989, Vol. IV, p. 498.
2. Swami Vivekananda: "Divine Love", *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, 1989, Vol. VI, pp. 72-73.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 339.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 254-55.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-07.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-39.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 72-73.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 381-82.
9. *Ibid.*, "The Living God", *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 169.
10. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 163.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

7

Humanism and Spiritualism: Vivekananda's Efflorescence

Unlike any other harbinger of humanism, Swami Vivekananda makes a fusion of humanism and spiritualism where the essence of humanism enkindles in one the spirit of inherent ascent and excellence. What type of humanism does actually stand in the test of crystallization of consciousness? What inherent commotion really contributes to furtherance and poignance of human thoughts and emotions in terms of the exercise of spirituality? How can one rebuild and rededicate oneself for the advancement of humankind where the seeds, as it were, of spirituality are allowed to thrive and flourish with a serene vision of man the ever victorious? All these and numerous other allied queries in quest of humanism of the best kind of essence and efflorescence come under the purview of Vivekananda's philosophy of humanism.

When Vivekananda speaks of *Prana* as a mental force, he actually reminds us of that spiritualism which stands for Pranayama, the unparalleled and incomparable human exercise which enables anyone how to shorten the time for achievement of perfection in course of intensification of the power of assimilation of whatever stands best for the ascent and excellence of humankind. This is why he explains at length the spirit of the whole science of Yoga in terms of humanism and spiritualism best synchronised in unending human endeavour:

> The ideal of the Yogi, the whole science of Yoga, is directed to the end of teaching men how, by intensifying the power of assimilation, to shorten the time for reaching perfection, instead of slowly advancing from point to point and waiting until the whole human race has become perfect. All the great prophets, saints, and seers of the world—what did they do? In one span of life they lived the whole life of humanity, traversed the whole length of time, that it takes ordinary humanity to come to perfection. In one life they perfect themselves; they have no thought for anything else, never live a moment for any other idea, and thus the way is shortened for them. This is what is meant by concentration, intensifying the power of assimilation, thus shortening the time. Raj-Yoga is the science which teaches us how to gain the power of concentration.

What has Pranayama to do with spiritualism? Spiritualism is also a manifestation of Pranayama. If it be true that the departed spirits exist, only we cannot see them, it is quite probable that there may be hundreds and millions of them about us we can neither see, feel, nor touch. We may be continually passing and repassing through their bodies, and they do not see or feel us. It is a circle within a circle, universe within a universe. We have five senses, and we represent *Prana* in a certain state of vibration. All beings in the same state of vibration will see one another, but if there are beings who represent Prana in a higher state of vibration, they will not be seen. We may increase the intensity of a light until we cannot see it at all, but there may be beings with eyes so powerful that they can see such light. Again, if the vibrations are very low, we do not see a light, but there are animals that may see it, as cats and owls. Our range of vision is only one plane of the vibrations of this Prana. Take this atmosphere, for instance; it is piled up layer on layer, but the layers nearer the earth are denser than those above, and as you go higher the atmosphere becomes finer and finer. Or take the case of ocean; as you go deeper and deeper, the pressure of the water increases, and animals which live at the bottom of the sea can never come up, or they will be broken into pieces.[1]

Vivekananda always asserts that the essence of humanity is always an inseparable part of spirituality and *vice versa*. Humankind can never be alienated from spirituality as the inherent divinity in every human being prompts and propels him or her to be justified to the best of his or her very being which awaits serene efflorescence and ascent all the time and in all possible sensitised endeavour. Vivekananda never loses the hope of human fulfilment or perfection in terms of awakening of the aura of spirituality. He rather reminds us of our real worth *vis-a-vis* the power of the Infinite and the power of the soul. He has this firm conviction that the universe cannot, with our ceaseless exercise of the inherent spirit of divinity, remain apart from the prized glory of perfection. The only thing required for every human endeavour is to be true to everyone in order to be true to oneself. Vivekananda makes this point very clear when he delves deep into the idea of privilege, the 'bane' of human life as he adroitly advocates, in terms of Vedanta:

> If some persons think they know more of spirituality, of God, they claim a superior privilege over everyone else. They say, "Come down and worship us, ye common herds; we are the messengers of God, and you have to worship us." None can be Vedantists, and at the same time admit of privilege for anyone. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the claim to privilege? All knowledge is in every soul, even in the most ignorant; he has not manifested it, but, perhaps, he has not had the opportunity, the environments were not, perhaps, suitable to him. When he gets the opportunity, he will manifest it. The idea that one man is born superior

> to another has no meaning in the Vedanta; that between two nations one is superior and the other inferior has no meaning whatsoever. Put them in the same circumstances, and see whether the same intelligence comes out or not. Before that you have no right to say that one nation is superior to another. And as to spirituality, no privilege should be claimed there. It is a privilege to serve mankind, for this is the worship of God. God is here, in all these human souls. He is the soul of man. What privilege can man ask? There are no special messengers of God, never were, and never can be. All beings, great or small, are equally manifestations of God; the difference is only in the manifestation. The same eternal message, which has been eternally given, comes to them little by little, the eternal message has been written in the heart of every being; it is there already, and all are struggling to express it. Some, in suitable circumstances, express it a little better than others, but as bearers of the message they are all one. What claim to superiority is there? The most ignorant man, the most ignorant child, is as great a messenger of God as any that ever existed, and as great as any that are yet to come. For the infinite message is there imprinted once for all in the heart of every being. Wherever there is a being, that being contains the infinite message of the Most High. It is there. The work of the Advaita, therefore, is to break down all these privileges. It is the hardest work of all, and curious to say, it has been less active than anywhere else in the land of its birth. If there is any land of privilege, it is the land which gave birth to this philosophy—privilege for the spiritual man as well as for the man of birth. There they have not so much privilege for money (that is one of the benefits, I think), but privilege for birth and spirituality is everywhere.[2]

The quest for spirituality in humanism as Vivekananda advocates is never an isolated quest but an integral one where humanity has its best representations in the spiritual endeavour of man. The humanist vision of man is a quest within himself, a quest that unendingly serves the essence of human excellence. This is why Vivekananda gives more importance to the ideas of spirituality that are practical and down to earth. This is also why he makes us aware again and again that God is in man, all pervading, omniscient and at the same time omnipresent. So what man requires to be truly spiritual and at the same time humanist is to work for the good of mankind and work ceaselessly as the all pervading God is existent in man.

Vivekananda also reminds us through his Karma-yoga of the synthesis of humanism and spirituality. When he speaks of the *Sattvika* man, he actually asserts the fact that all men should be working and struggling, doing good and preaching for whatever is good for mankind. Actually, when one becomes a true worker for the advancement of humanism one really exercises spirituality not of course apparently but certainly introspectively. This means that one cannot remain apart from the spiritual force working endlessly within oneself. Therefore, one cannot remain apart from either spirituality or humanism as one wants to be a true worker.

A practical humanist is therefore a practical spiritualist. Such a practical humanist with his constant crystallisation of the self in order to be in fusion with his spiritual self becomes devoid of any attachment—worldly or otherwise. He becomes oblivious of his own self and cannot but come to the conclusion that the real worker does not work, for it is the Greatest Worker who compels him to work without any interest of the self. Thus he becomes an eternal partner of the Ever Serene with all the qualities of spirituality followed by the greatest qualities—perfection and freedom which are the ends-in-view of Karma-Yoga. Vivekananda characteristically unfolds this truth as follows:

> Those whose whole soul is gone into the *Self*, those whose desires are confined in the *Self*, who have become ever associated with the *Self*, for them there is no work. Such are indeed the highest of mankind; but apart from them everyone else has to work. In so working we should never

think that we can help on even the least thing in this universe. We cannot. We only help ourselves in this gymnasium of the world. This is the proper attitude of work. If we work in this way, if we always remember that our present opportunity to work thus is a privilege which has been given to us, we shall never be attached to anything. Millions like you and me think that we are great people in the world; but we all die and in five minutes the world forgets us. But the life of God is infinite. " Who can live a moment, breathe a moment, if this all-powerful One does not will it?" He is the ever active Providence. All power is His and within His command. Through His command the winds blow, the sun shines, the earth lives and death stalks upon the earth. He is the all in all; He is all and in all. We can only worship Him. Give up all fruits of work; do good for its own sake; then alone will come perfect non-attachment. The bonds of the heart will thus break, and we shall reap perfect freedom. This freedom is indeed the goal of Karma-Yoga.[3]

Bearing in mind the viewpoints of Karma-Yoga in the light of Vivekananda's philosophy of humanism, which always accommodates spirituality in the most unassumed fashion, the ends-in-view of spirituality demand an overhauling in terms of our day-to-day approach to human life. How to eliminate the little desires of the mind? How to prepare oneself to be free from the bonds of Maya or all narrow earthly attractions? How to enrich and accelerate the mind towards endless strivings for self-knowledge? How to transcend oneself from the narrow domain of Personal God to the serene vision of awakening of Brahman in all effulgence of fullness. The finer ends-in-view of spirituality as Vivekananda strongly advocates, encompass and negotiate all these questions in terms of man who seeks the spiritual vision of Brahman in continual pursuit of renunciation and the good of all along-with self-advancement and self-purification in devotion to attainment of self-knowledge. Making a humanistic and at the same time spiritual introspection into the very endeavour of man as a divine being seeking his identity with Brahman, he characteristically elucidates:

> Man is man in so far as he is qualified by the limiting adjunct of mind. Through the mind he has to understand and grasp everything, and therefore whatever he thinks must be limited by the mind. Hence it is the natural tendency of man to argue, from the analogy of his own personality, the personality of Ishvara(God). Man can only think of his ideal as a human being. When buffeted by sorrows in this world of disease and death he is driven to desperation and helplessness, then he seeks refuge with someone, relying on whom he may feel safe. But where is that refuge to be found? The omnipresent Atman depends on nothing else to support. It is the only Refuge. At first man does not find that. When discrimination and dispassion arise in the course of meditation and spiritual practices, he comes to know of it. But, in whatever way he may progress on the path of spirituality, everyone is unconsciously awakening Brahman within him. But the means may be different in different cases. Those who have in the Personal God have to undergo spiritual practices holding on to that idea. If there is sincerity, through that will come the awakening of the lion of Brahman within him. The knowledge of Brahman is the one goal of all beings but the various ideas are the various paths to it. Although the real nature of the *Jiva* is Brahman, still as he has identification with the qualifying adjunct of mind, he suffers from all sorts of doubts and difficulties, pleasure and pain. But everyone from Brahma down to a blade of grass is advancing towards the realisation of his real nature. And none can escape the round of births and deaths until he realises his identity with Brahman. Getting the human birth, when the desire for freedom becomes very strong, and along-with it comes the grace of a person of realisation, then man's desire for Self-knowledge becomes intensified. Otherwise the mind of men given to lust and greed never inclines that way.[4]

To be a true humanist one cannot but exercise spirituality. The practice of spirituality in right earnest can alone show one the right avenue of how to be able to be humane and divine in course of sharing and experiencing the sorrows and sufferings side by side with the best wishes and possibilities of all-round advancement of humankind. Mere understanding of spirituality would not suffice. One must involve oneself in the practice of perfection of spirituality not only within oneself but also in the heartland of humanity. This is why Vivekananda discourages the theoretical foundations of spirituality alone in man and emphasizes on the practical efflorescence of spirituality in all possible endeavour of sincerity. Let every human being strive for that end-in-view of spirituality.

Let everyone be inspired with the earnest inherent spirit of doing good to anyone in and around him as he does so for the well-being of the near and dear ones of his own family. Then alone the spirit of humanism can encounter the dawn of a new consciousness of spirituality. As a practical and humanistic visionary who has incomparably given a new dimension of realisation of spirituality in the most unassuming and natural manifestation of ascent and excellence of man, Vivekananda distinctly asserts:

> What is the good of that spiritual practice or realisation which does not benefit others, does not conduce to the well-being of people sunk in ignorance and delusion, does not help in rescuing them from the clutches of lust and wealth? Do you think, so long as one *Jiva* endures in bondage, you will have any liberation? So long as he is not liberated—it may take several lifetimes—you will have to be born to help him, to make him realise Brahman. Every Jiva is part of yourself—which is the rationale of all work for others. As you desire the whole-hearted good of your wife and children, knowing them to be your own, so when a little amount of love and attraction for every *Jiva* will awaken in you, then I shall know that Brahma is awakening in you, not a moment before. When this feeling of the all-round good of all without respect for caste or

colour will awaken in your heart, then I shall know you are advancing towards the ideal.[5]

What should man as a spiritual humanist aim at in his service for humanity? How far should he involve himself in his mission of realising the efflorescence of spirituality? Vivekananda advises us to be ever on the alert in holding Truth at all cost and courageously encounter all forms of eventualities. Moreover, let there be eternal holidays of dreams that more often than not blur our vision of being active and practical in our striving for Truth and Love.

As a poetic and spiritual visionary, Vivekananda unfolds the backdrop of a new image of man rising up with love personified with all the glory and marvels of Freedom and Truth. In the concluding lines of his famous poem "To the Awakened India" he characteristically expresses this spiritual and humanistic vision of man in telling words of advice:

> Awake, arise, and dream no more!
> This is the land of dreams, where Karma
> Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts
> Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none
> Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
> The softest breath of Truth drives back to
> Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
> The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,
> Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
> Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.[6]

The power of spirituality in every human being is endless. This can be understood if everyone of us do feel and act with the spirit of divinity already within everyone of us. Then humanism would certainly find a newer avenue of manifestation of God in everyone of us. Then we would be able to understand and feel that the spirit of God is always within us and each one of us can say; I am God. Shivoham. Vivekananda's advice in this connection is very suggestive and specific:

> First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. "Be and make". Let this be our motto. Say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is a God. Even if there were a devil, it would be our duty to remember God always, and not the devil.
>
> If the room is dark, the constant feeling and repeating of darkness will not take it away, but bring in the light. Let us know that all that is negative, all that is destructive, all that is mere criticism, is bound to pass away; it is the positive, the affirmative, the constructive that is immortal, that will remain for ever. Let us say "We are" and "God is" and "We are God", "Shivoham, Shivoham", and march on. Not matter but spirit. All that has name and form is subject to all that has none. This is the eternal truth the Shrutis preach. Bring in the light; the darkness will vanish of itself. Let the lion of Vedanta roar; the foxes will fly to their holes. Throw the ideas broadcast, and let the result take care of itself. Let us put the chemicals together; the crystallisation will take its own course. Bring forth the power of the sprit, and pour it over the length and breadth of India; and all that is necessary will come by itself.[7]

To be on the right track of making a true fusion between humanism and spiritualism is to realise endlessly the vision of God within oneself as an embodiment of love. Such a realisation of God as love necessitates extinction of personality whereby one can frankly realise that one is simply a cipher and whatever one is and does is simply the great gift of the All Love.

Self-liberation and self-denial are, therefore, the fundamental components of exercising spirituality in right earnest. Vivekananda advises us to rise above 'the plane of the senses' and strive continually for merging in divine humanity and visualising the All Love in every one of us. In his own words:

> When you think upon a problem, there is no sense of enjoyment there, but [the] exquisite delight of thought . . . . It is that makes the man . . . . Take one great idea! It deepens.

> Concentration comes. You no longer feel your body. Your senses have stopped. You are above all physical senses. All that was manifesting itself through the senses is concentrated upon that one idea. That moment you are higher than the animal. You get the revelation none can take from you—a direct perception of something higher than the body . . . . Therein is the gold of mind, not upon the plane of the senses.
>
> Thus, working through the plane of the senses, you get more and more entry into the other regions, and then this world falls away from you. You are one glimpse of that spirit, and then your senses and your sense-enjoyments, your clinging to the flesh, will all melt away from you. Glimpse and glimpse will come from the realm of spirit. You will have finished Yoga, and spirit will stand revealed as spirit. Then you will begin the worship of God as spirit. Then you will begin to understand that worship is not to gain something. At heart, our worship was that infinite-finite element, love, which [is] an eternal sacrifice at the feet of the Lord by the soul. "Thou and not I. I am dead. Thou art, and I am not. I do not want wealth, nor beauty, no, not even learning. I do not want salvation. If it be Thy will, let me go into twenty million hells. I only want one thing : Be Thou my love".[8]

Vivekananda also draws our attention to the fact that cultivation of the spirit of humanism pre-necessitates efflorescence of all the essentials of spiritual forces inherent in every one of us. If every individual strives for spirituality in one's endeavour as best as possible, there cannot but be a new awakening of man and society—regional, national, global or whatsoever it may be. What is always required on the part of every one is to continually evolve for the cause of others. Let everyone of us feel and caress others. Let the first lesson of spirituality be humane. Let each of us ceaselessly think, act and sacrifice for the good of others. Only then will a humanistic and spiritual society be a reality. As Vivekananda solemnly advocates:

> All healthy social changes are the manifestations of the spiritual forces working within, and if these are strong and well-adjusted, society will arrange itself accordingly. Each individual has to work out his own salvation; there is no other way, and so with nations. Again, the great institutions of every nation are the conditions of its very existence and cannot be transformed by the mould of any other race. Until higher institutions have been evolved, any attempt to break the old ones will be disastrous. Growth is always gradual.
>
> It is very easy to point out the defects of institutions, all being more or less imperfect, but he is the real benefactor of humanity who helps the individual to overcome his imperfections under whatever institutions he may live. The individuals being raised, the nation and its institutions are bound to rise. Bad customs and laws are ignored by the virtuous, and unwritten but mightier laws of love, sympathy, and integrity take their place. Happy is the nation which can rise to the necessity of but few law books, and needs no longer to bother its head about this or that institution. Good men rise beyond all laws and help their fellows to rise under whatever conditions they live.[9]

When would we evolve ourselves in the great task of the fusion of spirituality and humanism ?

References

1. Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, 1989, Vol. I, pp. 157 -58.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 423-24.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-07.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 192-93.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 235-36.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 388-89.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 351.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 68-69.
9. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 415-16.

8

Humanism and Peace: Vivekananda's Vision

To be at peace is to be in the balance of mind. It is a blessing for every human being. For peace one can go ahead sacrificing any thing, any hope, any longing, any matter or incident related to day-to-day affairs of life; but even then peace may be elusive, fragmentary, transitory, painful, sordid or unwanted. Human psychology is so varied and multi-dimensional that the craving for peace remains everlasting, partial, insatiable and penetrating. It aches the mind and the heart unendingly. It prompts every person of any age and at any stage to make a quest again and again for identifying and finding out the best essence of peace yet to be encountered or enjoyed, negotiated or appreciated. The reasons are obvious. With intelligence and wisdom as the incomparable components of identity, man alone ranks the best among all other living beings. Moreover, it is man and man alone who best exercises the invaluable spirit of transparency which enkindles in him the eternal aura of how to enter into the world of beyonding of consciousness over and above the normal phase of bare living for the sake of living in this material world.

Indeed, living in this world is a great opportunity for self-discovery and self-assessment. It is also an opportunity for learning the lesson of peace that the mind strives for self-assertion in the right context and with the right frame of mind. How arrive at the right context and at the right frame of mind in exercising peace under diverse circumstances? How to be always on the alert to raise the mind from all temptations and paltry desires? How to be worthy of others in order to be worthy of oneself and *vice versa* so that the real aroma of peace becomes a reality and it sustains from life beyond life? Swami Vivekananda makes an introspective study of the human mind from these different angles of thought and action and makes a distinct and classic approach to peace in terms of living and thriving humanism. As he succinctly elucidates:

> There is a common platform, a common ground of understanding, a common humanity, which must be the basis of our work. We ought to find out that complete and perfect human nature which is working only in parts here and there. It has not been given to one man to have everything in perfection. You have a part to play; I, in my humble way, another; here is one who plays a little part; there, another. The perfection is the combination of all these parts. Just as with individuals, so with races. Each race has a part to play; each race has one side of human nature to develop. And we have to take all these together; and, possibly in the distant future, some race will arise in which all these marvellous individual race perfections, attained by the different races, will come together and form a new race, the like of which the world has not yet dreamed. Beyond saying that, I have no criticism to offer about anybody. I have not travelled a little in my life. I have kept my eyes open; and the more I go about the more my mouth is closed.[1]

Vivekananda makes us aware of the fact that peace in humankind is never an isolated affair which has nothing to contribute in the vision of the All Beautiful. He always reminds us of that every one of us is inseparably related to the All Beautiful, and as such, we are all little sparks of the All Beautiful

Himself. This spirit of involution, as he asserts, is the origin of peace that unendingly contributes to the advancement of humanism.

Again, when Vivekananda refers to God as the soul of souls, the two factors that are important for making a happy unison and, therefore, peace of the human mind are identification of the spirit of man with the eternal spirit of God and unification of the little particles of the divine spirit with which all of us are gifted by Him. This, however, never comes at crossroads with manifestation of individuality. Nor does it ever hamper peace, which makes serene inroads to inner consciousness.

Making an introspective study of God as the embodiment of man from the point of inner peace and harmony in the light of the above, Vivekananda categorically observes:

> Man begins to find out that if God is the cause of the universe and universe of the effect, God Himself must have become the universe and the souls, and he is but a particle of which God is the whole. We are but little beings, sparks of that mass of fire, and the whole universe is a manifestation of God Himself. This is the next step. In Sanskrit, it is called *Vishishtadvaita*. Just as I have this body and this body covers the soul, and the soul is in and through this body, so this whole universe of infinite souls and nature forms, as it were, the body of God. When the period of involution comes, the universe becomes finer and finer, yet remains the body of God. When the gross manifestation comes, also the universe remains the body of God. Just as the human soul is the soul of the human body and mind, so God is the Soul of our souls. All of you have heard this expression in every religion, "*Soul of our souls*". That is what is meant by it. He, as it were, resides in them, guides them, is the ruler of them all. In the first view, that of dualism, each one of us is an individual, eternally separate from God and nature. In the second view, we are individuals but not separate from God. We are like little particles floating in one mass, and that mass

> is God. We are individuals but one in God. We are all in Him. We are all parts of Him, and therefore we are One. And yet between man and man, man and God, there is a strict individuality, separate and yet not separate.[2]

Vivekananda unfolds the new vision of man as a harbinger of peace and humanism. He also wants every one of us to be well aware of the indomitable spirit of the soul—the spirit that knows no defeat and never yields to any ignoble aims and objectives. This is the veritable spirit that shows us the avenues of how to attain heavenly peace by dedicating ourselves to the cause of encountering the All Beautiful. This is not an easy course to follow. One is to be always on the alert to raise oneself above all selfish motives and desires and steadily pursue the path of identification and unison of oneself with love.

Leaving aside all bonds of selfishness and treading the path of ascent and transcendence should, therefore, be the primary objective of our quest for peace in all exercises humanistic or the welfare of one and all. In his poem "Requiescat in Peace" Vivekananda personifies the soul to have the divine and at the same time humane response:

> Speed forth, O Soul! Upon thy star-strewn path;
> Speed, blissful one! Where thought is ever free,
> Where time and space no longer mist the view,
> Eternal peace and blessings be with thee!
>
> Thy service true, complete thy sacrifice,
> Thy home the heart of love transcendent find;
> Remembrance sweet, that kills all space and time,
> Like altar roses fill thy place behind!
>
> Thy bonds are broke, thy quest in bliss is found,
> And one with That which comes as Death and Life;
> Thou helpful one! Unselfish e'er on earth,
> Ahead! Still help with love this world with strife![3]

Elsewhere, Vivekananda makes a very simplistic and living description of how peace and humanism are intertwined in the life of every living being:

Behold, it comes in might,
The power that is not power,
The light that is in darkness,
The shade in dazzling light.

It is joy that never spoke,
And grief unfelt, profound,
Immortal life unlived,
Eternal death unmourned.

It is not joy nor sorrow,
But that which is between,
It is not night nor morrow,
But that which joins them in.

It is sweet rest in music;
And peace in sacred art;
The silence between speaking;
Between two fits of passion—
It is the calm of heart.

It is beauty never seen,
And love that stands alone,
It is song that lives un-sung,
And knowledge never known.

It is death between two lives,
And lull between two storms,
The void whence rose creation,
And that where it returns.

To it the tear-drop goes,
To spread the smiling form,
It is the Goal of Life,
And Peace—its only home![4]

When would we believe that it is peace and peace alone which should be adored and endeared as our only home and hope of humanity?

References

1. Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, 1989, Vol. VIII, pp. 56-57.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 430.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 389.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 395-96.

9

Towards a New Image of Man: Vivekananda's Explorations

Man today is far from what he ought to be. He is yet to have his own identity within himself. He is yet to be in a position to say with boldness "I am" . This has made him rather a hopeless identity than having an enviable oneness with the All Beautiful. He fights shy of declaring himself as the best creation of God. He fails to prove that in him and in him alone the worth of humanism rests and rests for serene efflorescence.

The humanistic interpretation of man as the embodiment of God and *vice versa* is yet to have its full dividend. As a matter of fact, when we speak of man as the representative of God, we fall back upon some superficial principles and guidelines that prompt or perhaps tempt us to underrate or debase the image of both man and God owing to our failure to prove ourselves worthy of exposing the serene and blessed qualities that bring forth the true image of the latter.

That man ought to have the living concept of God in himself is the only way of returning to the roots of humanism. Swami Vivekananda time and again makes us aware of this living truth. He always reminds us that the All Beautiful is within us, around us, beyond us and beside us. This very concept of the All Beautiful has assigned man with greater responsibilities. He is always in quest of the religion of all religions—the religion that ennobles the vision of man. This quest is to behold the living God in anything and everything, anywhere and everywhere. As Vivekananda strongly advocates:

> We want to worship a living God. I have seen nothing but God all my life, nor have you. To see this chair you first see God, and then the chair in and through Him. He is everywhere saying, "I am". The moment you feel "I am", you are conscious of His Existence. Where shall we go to find God if we cannot see Him in our own hearts and in every living being? "Thou art the man, Thou art the woman. Thou art the girl, and Thou art the boy. Thou art the old man tottering with a stick. Thou art the young man walking in the pride of his strength". Thou art all that exists, a wonderful living God who is the only fact in the universe. This seems to many to be a terrible contradiction to the traditional God who leaves behind a veil somewhere and whom nobody ever sees.

** ** ** ** ** ** ** **

You are God and so am I; who obeys whom? Who worships whom? You are the highest temple of God; I would rather worship you than any temple, image, or Bible. Why are some people so contradictory in their thought? They are like fish slipping through our fingers. They say they are hard-headed practical men. Very good. But what is more practical than worshipping here, worshipping you? I see you, feel you, and I know you are God. The Mohammedans says, there is no God but Allah. The Vedanta says, there is nothing that is not God. It may frighten many of you, but you will understand it by degrees. The living God is within you, and yet you are building churches and temples and believing all sorts of imaginary nonsense. The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course, all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any advantage. The moment I have realised God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him—that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.[1]

To be on the right track of humanism is to stick to truth under any circumstances. This will lead us to follow the right course of action in understanding and appreciating that there is divinity in every human being. As soon as we realise this truth, we will be able to honour and glorify every human being as the embodiment of God. Man will, then, come closest to man and, therefore, to God. If man devotes himself to this vision of man as the divine being, there will no longer be any form of hatred, anger, fear, crime or punishment.

Vivekananda highlights the truth as above from his own practical experience and advises us to be bold enough to do away with all forms of superstitions in order to justify the inherent divinity and freedom:

> The more I live, the more I become convinced everyday that every human being is divine. In no man or woman, however vile, does that divinity die. Only he or she does not know how to reach it and is waiting for the Truth. And wicked people are trying to deceive him or her with all sorts of fooleries. If one man cheats another for money, you say he is a fool and a blackguard. How much greater is the inequity of one who wants to fool others spiritually! This is too bad. It is the one test, that truth must make you strong and put you above superstition. The duty of the philosopher is to raise you above superstitions; what infinite souls you are! And to be tricked by twinkling stars! It is a shameful condition. You are divinities; the twinkling stars owe their existence in you.
>
> I was once travelling in the Himalayas, and the long road stretched before us. We poor monks cannot get any one to carry us, so we had to make all the way on foot.

> There was an old man with us. The way goes up and down hundreds of miles, and when that old monk saw what was before him, he said, "Oh, sir, how to cross it; I cannot walk any more; my chest will break." I said to him, "Look down at your feet." He did so, and I said, "The road that is under your feet is the road that you have passed over and is the same road that you see before you; it will soon be under your feet." The highest things are under your feet, because you are Divine Stars; all these things are under your feet. You can swallow the stars by the handful if you want; such is your real nature. Be strong, get beyond all superstitions, and be free.[2]

A firm believer in the divinity of man, Vivekananda instills this truth in us that no good is ever lost. Victory to goodness is in the long run a serene and blissful reality. Whoever, therefore, strives for the good of all mankind comes closest to the inherent divinity that never allows any form of desolation, failure or hopelessness to thrive and sustain in the kingdom of God.

How to be guided by the spirit of goodness that is the cocoon of humanism? How to negotiate the diverse and difficult constraints of human life? Here is Vivekananda's soulful and spirited response:

The duties of life are sore indeed,
And its pleasures fleeting, vain,
The goal so shadowy seems and dim,
Yet plod on through the dark, brave heart,
With all thy might and main.

Not a work will be lost, no struggle vain,
Though hopes be blighted, powers gone;
Of thy loins shall come the heirs to all,
Then hold on yet awhile, brave soul,
No good is ever undone.

Though the good and the wise in life are few,
Yet theirs are the reins to lead,
The masses know but late the worth;
Heed none and gently guide.

With thee are those who see afar,
With thee is the Lord of might,
All blessings pour on thee, great soul,
To thee may all come right![3]

The image of man as Vivekananda presents us is always a challenge to uphold the inherent divinity. This will show us the lost avenues of the real identity of man, the greatest being on earth. Moreover, man as man cannot remain isolated from the Divine Land—*Brahmaloka*. He must prepare himself to be justified as a divine human being by continually sticking to the way to the All Beautiful as well as the way to heaven, which Vivekananda identifies as Devayana and Pitriyana respectively. While discussing at length on the difference between the real and the apparent man, he highlights the image of man as the greatest being from the standpoint of the Vedanta philosophy:

> All men who do certain good and great acts, but the general tenor of whose lives has not been correct, will become gods; and after living for some time in god-bodies, enjoying the powers of gods, they will again have to become men; when the power of the good acts is thus finished, the old evil comes up to be worked out. Those who do extraordinarily evil acts have to put on ghost and devil bodies, and when the effect of those evil actions is exhausted, the little good action which remains associated with them, makes them again become men. The way to Brahmaloka, from which there is no more fall or return, is called the Devayana, i.e. the way to God; the way to heaven is known as Pitriyana, i.e. the way to the fathers.
>
> Man, therefore, according to the Vedanta philosophy, is the greatest being that is in the universe, and this world of work the best place in it, because only herein is the greatest and the best chance for him to become perfect. Angels or gods, whatever you may call them, have all to become men, if they want to become perfect. This is the

> great centre, the wonderful poise, and the wonderful opportunity—this human life[4].

As an iconoclast in the practical philosophy of humanism, Vivekananda advises us to rise above the little ego and convert the little self in every one of us to the divine self—the self that shows us the way to become Jivanmukta, selfless. This definitely adds a new dimension to what man should be as a true humanist. Vivekananda places this image of man above everything else, not to speak of either religion or spirituality as the case may be. The 'I' in everyone must be selfless and, in order to be selfless, it must be Jivanmukta as Vivekanada strives for the ascent and excellence of man. In his own words:

> Until we give up the world manufactured by the ego, never can we enter the Kingdom of Heaven. None ever did, none ever will. To give up the world is to utterly forget the ego, to know it not at all, living in the body but not being ruled by it. This rascal ego must be obliterated. Power to help mankind is with the silent ones who only live and love and withdraw their own personality entirely. They never say 'me' or 'mine'; they are only blessed in being the instruments to help others. They are wholly identified with God, asking nothing and not consciously doing anything. They are the true Jivanmuktas—the absolutely selfless, their little personality thoroughly blown away, ambition non-existent. They are all principle, with no personality. The more we sink the 'little self', the more God comes. Let us get rid of the little 'I' and let only the great 'I' live in us. Our best work and our greatest influence is when we are without a thought of self. It is the 'desireless' who bring great results to pass. Bless men when they revile you. Think how much good they are doing by helping to stamp out the false ego. Hold fast to the real Self, think only pure thoughts and you will accomplish more than a regiment of mere preachers. Out of purity and silence comes the word of power[5].

Indeed, to explore the new image of man, we ought to explore the true identity of man as the Living God. Vivekananda rightly suggests us how to explore the true identity of man, not by merely following the traditional avenue of following certain principles, rules and regulations to be found in scriptures or mandates of religion but in accepting and actualizing the Living God inherent in every human being. As he very poignantly asserts:

> He who is in you and outside you,
> Who works through all hands,
> Who walks on all feet,
> Whose body are all ye,
> Him worship, and break all other idols!
>
> He who is at-once the high and low,
> The sinner and the saint,
> Both God and worm,
> Him worship—visible, knowable, real, omnipresent,
> Break all other idols![6]

When would we explore the apposite avenues of breaking all other idols in order to explore the image of man anew and afresh?

References

1. Swami Vivekananda: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, 1989, Vol. II, pp. 320-21.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 186-87.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 390.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 271-72.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 31-32.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

10

Post-Thoughts

Humanism is now at crossroads with modernity. What prompts man to be modern in the true sense of the term appallingly falls short of the minimum essence of humanism. To speak of excellence in humanistic endeavour now-a-days is to hold a very bleak picture of the future of man.

How to eliminate the oddities and the dark sides of the modern humanism that cares little for the ascent of man and aggravates, on the other hand, manifold constraints consequential to the loss of the real man, the man who knows and knows very well how always to negate the little self and devotes himself to the prized cause of the Supreme Self ? How to make this beautiful world of ours a very worthy and serene place, which is actually the Kingdom of God ? How to be, and make everyone irrespective of caste, creed, community and so on, aware of the real identity of man as the best living creature to uphold and extend the glory of humanism?

One of the most significant harbingers of humanism the world has ever seen, Swami Vivekananda makes the most practical approach to humanism, where adoration greets extinction of personality and devotion is another name of sincere involvement in the all-round goodness of mankind anytime, anywhere. He does away with lifeless rites and rituals and welcomes the positive man who cares more for the lowly and the lost than for the attainment of so-called religious and spiritual recognition. In fact, he is more interested in the regenerated humanity of the desolate and the downtrodden than in the quest for excellence in the so-called religious scholarship.

Deep down in his heart of hearts, Vivekananda feels and reminds us of the fact that true humanism always awaits a humanized society born of, and bred in, the rich harvest of love, sympathy, neighbourliness, tolerance, simplicity and similar other virtues which always necessitate cultivation and dissemination in right earnest. Looking introspectively at the modern day ills of the society where all these qualities are more or less ignored and jeopardized, where is the more pulsating and thrilling alternative than following the footprints of Vivekananda whose incomparable vision of humanism makes inroads to inner awakening in embracing every man and woman of the society as our most loving brother and sister and honouring each of them as a divine human being?

It is undeniably the high time to christen humanism as Vivekananda always harps on, in the altar of education. Who denies that unless education takes the key role, there cannot be any genuine progress of humanism? That today's education is far away from humanistic principles and hardly cares for 'manifestation of perfection already in man' needs to be rethought and re-evaluated in terms of the ascent of man.

Vivekananda's assertion of synchronization between humanism and aesthetics is yet to be given its proper due as humanism now is bereft of the minimum exposure of aesthetic sensibilities. His vision of man as the greatest aesthetic being is yet to be fulfilled in our day-to-day thought and actions, principles and practicalities. Vivekananda also adds a newer dimension of humanism where the world is not a bare place to live in but a passport to the beyonding of man. This very spirit of humanism looks forward to a newer approach to our march for excellence. Our consciousness of being well bred in the best spirit of humanism cannot but welcome mysticism not merely in theory but in practice as well for the fullness of man.

The rich aroma of excellence in humanism as Vivekananda advocates in his vibrant vision of the advancement of humanism is yet to be given a new habitation and a new name in the modern world of ours. The inroads of inner awareness for the progress of humanism cannot but accede to the essential components of spirituality about which Vivekananda is always eager to instill in us the framework of serenity and sobriety. Added to these are the components, which also call forth the qualities of living consciousness where man becomes not only careful of his own position as a man but at the same time he merges in the welfare of others. He gives humanism a new definition and a new position from where he acts silently but definitely diligently for the cause of humanism.

When would we pay our real homage to Swami Vivekananda as an unparalleled harbinger of humanism?

DISTRICT LIBRARY
Acc No: 19747
Cost: ....
Date: 8/2
SRINAGAR

Index

"A Hindu Monk of India" 2-3
Act of Limitation 44
Advancement of Humanism 41, 65, 101
— Vibrant Vision of the 114
Advancement of Man 16, 34
Advocates for Education 4
Aesthetic
— Component of Disinterestedness 58
— Component of Renunciation 72
— Component of Truth 62
— Humanistic Force 59
— of Love 64
— World of Fineness 69
Aesthetics of Humanism 65, 72
Age-old Tradition and Devotion to Religion of Man 9
Alasinga 25, 49
Altar of Education 113
Ardent Humanist 41

Basic Tenet of Vivekananda's Philosophy of Man 64
Believer in the Divinity of Man 108
Blessings of Education of Humanism 23
Blindness to any Faith in any Religion 55

Central Truth in Our Religion 51
Chain of Superstition 50
Champion of Humane Sensibility 70
Characteristic of One Man 36
Christians and Mohammadans 66
Concept of
— Atman 62
— God 14, 72
— Living 84, 105
— Religion 72
— Soul 2
Connoisseur of Humanism 1, 33
Crucial Vehicle of Efflorescence of Humanism 3
Crux of Humanism 7

Delicate Issue of Aesthetics in Humanistic Endeavour 70
Dimension of Humanism
— Diverse 46
— New 113
Divine Being 23, 51, 79
Down-trodden Millions of India 51

Education for Humanism 26
Efflorescence of Humanism 3, 32, 36, 46
Efflorescence of Religion 44
Elimination of Selfishness 34
Essence of Humanists 89
Essential Component of Growth and Development of Humanity 44
Essential Element of Human Development 47
Essentials of Spiritual Forces 97
Ethical Laws of World 43
Evolution of Religion 47

Focal Point of Humanism 3
Follower of the *Srimadbhagvad Gita* 53
Fundamental Components of Human Assent and Excellence 61
Fusion of Society and Humanism 43

Glory of Education 21
Glory of Humanism 14, 42
Glory of Man 3
Goal of Humanism in Terms of Religion 54
Great Religions of the World 44
Great Waves 69
Greatest
— Blessings of Education of Humanism 23
— Generation of All Serene 57
— Help to Spiritual Life 17

Hallmark of Individuality 5
Harbinger of Humanism 57, 87, 112
Heartland of Humanism 56
Heartland of Humanity 94
Heaven of Humanity 41
Horizon of Humanism 13
Human Psychology 99
Human Society 37-38
— Graded 36
Humanist, Par Excellence 47
Humanist Vision of Man 91
Humanistic
— and Aesthetic Vision of the Serene 62
— Interpretation of Man 105

— Pattern of Education 31
— Spirit of an Individual 40
"Hymn of Samadhi, The" 76

Identification of Humanism 71
Identification of the Spirit of Man 101
Identity of Man 70
Image of Man 109
— New 1, 9
Indespensable Part of Practical Humanism 4
Indespensable Spirit of Advancement of Humanity 46
Infinite Being 62
Infinite Power of the Spirit 52
Inroads to Humanism 80
Inroads to Inner Consciousness 101

Jesus of Nazarath 83

Karma-Yoga 15, 37, 91
— Goal of 80-81, 92
Kingdom of God 112

Living and Dynamic Process of Human Development 48
Living Partner to Advancement of Humanism 47

Man-God Relationship 15
Manifestation of Ascent and Excellence of Man 94
Manifestations of Spiritual Forces 39
Manifold Avenues of Religions Thought 47
Matter of Ascent and Excellence of an Individual 39
Maya 19-20, 92
Mouthpiece of Every Society 29
Mystic Vision of Humanism 26, 79, 83
Mystic Vision of Man 85

Objective of Humanity 43
Origin of Peace 101

Peace and Humanism 103
Perennial Fountain of Love 86
Philosophy of Humanism 84, 86
Pioneer in Social Revolution 38
Plans and Progress of Education 26
Powerful Exponent of Training and Exercise of Human Mind 3
Principle of Causation 70
Process of Humanism 39

Quest for Dynamic Humanism 3
Quest for Spirituality in Humanism 90

Radical Humanist 10
Raj-Yoga 88
Real Awakening of Humanism 49
Real Benefactor of Humanity 39, 98
Realist and Practical Humanist 54
Religion in Terms of Humanity 45
Religions of the World 50
Religious Visionary 48
Representative of All-Serene 2, 33, 40

Role of
— Education 18
  — for Social Change 31
— Love 8
— One's Mystic Endeavour 6
— Purusha 79
— Three Fundamental Forces 36

Science of Yoga 88
Self-Liberation and Self-Denial 96
Servant of God 49
Sine qua non of Humanism 12
— of Social Excellence 34
Sinha, Shri Priya Nath 25
'Soul of Humanity' 44
Spirit of the Beyonding of Man 86
Spirit of Humanism 2, 7-8, 12, 46, 67, 113-14
Spirit of Renunciation 71
Synchronisation of Religion and Humanism 50
Synchronised Pattern of Advancement 2

Town of Khetri 10
Trio of Vivekananda's Viewpoints 74
True
— Humanist 74, 94
— Identity of Man 111
— Jivamuktas 110
— Religion 52
— Representative of Humanism 42
Truth of Religion and Humanism 55

Ultimate Reality of Knowledge 19
Unending Influence in Humanism 18
Universal Idea of Duty 37
Universal Thought Waves 69
Universe of Ours 70
Unparalleled Exponent of Education 18
Utilitarian Theory 35

Vedanta 62, 89-90, 106
— Philosophy 109
Vedas 52
Vibration of Evil Thoughts 68
Vishishtadvaita 101
Vision of
— Divine Being 6
— Great Aesthetic Thinkers 68
— Humanism 1-2, 6, 41, 81
— Man 2, 14-15, 29, 72, 77, 95, 106, 113
— Serene Humanism 60
Vivekananda's Philosophy of
— Aesthetics in Humanism 59
— Education 20, 24
— Humanism 69
— Synchronisation 74
Vivekananda's Vision of Humanism 27

Wealthiest Man 73
Work of Advaita 90
World of Aesthetics 57
World of Mysticism 76

Yogi's 42, 79

14747

Mohit Chakrabarti, D. Litt. : Teaches Education and English at Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, India. Honoured with National Award as teacher educator.

Credited with participation/presentation/acceptance of papers in international/national conferences, seminars, symposia etc. including the World Assembly of Teacher Educators, The University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica; Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China; Institute of Education, Singapore; First International Conference on 'Literature in Translation', Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; First International Symposium on 'India and World Literature', University of Delhi, Delhi; Sixth Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), University of Haifa, Israel; Workshop on Setting the Agenda for Change for Central Universities for the 21st Century organised by the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Consistent and prolific contributor to studies and researches on Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda.

Regular contributor to children's literature.

23 Cm Cloth 2001 Rs. 300
ISBN 81-7391-420-6

OF ALLIED INTEREST

• **New Dimensions in Child Education and Learning Processes** *Dolly Singh*	1999	Rs. 495
• **Critical Issues in Special Education** *James E. Ysseldyke, Bob Algozzine & Martha Thurlow*	1998	Rs. 795
• **Educational Psychology and Child Development** *Suchitra Deshprabhu*	1998	Rs. 495
• **Special Education : A Practical Approach for Teachers** *James E. Ysseldyke & Bob Algozzine*	1998	Rs. 995
• **Teacher Education : Modern Trends** *Mohit Chakrabarti*	1998	Rs. 450
• **Advanced Curriculum Construction** *Janardan Prasad & Vijay Kumari Kaushik*	1997	Rs. 595
• **Advanced Educational Administration** *Tara Chand & Ravi Prakash*	1997	Rs. 395
• **Advanced Educational Psychology** *Tara Chand & Ravi Prakash*	1997	Rs. 595
• **Advanced Educational Technology** *Janardan Prasad & Vijay Kumari Kaushik*	1997	Rs. 495
• **Advanced Methods of Physical and Health Education** *Tara Chand & Ravi Prakash*	1997	Rs. 395
• **Development Strategies in Modern Indian Education** *R.S. Pandey*	1997	Rs. 495
• **Educational Priorities and Dalit Society** *V. Muralidharan*	1997	Rs. 395
• **Value Education : Changing Perspectives** *Mohit Chakrabarti*	1997	Rs. 300
• **Adult Education and Social Growth** *S.N. Sharma & Ravi Prakash*	1996	Rs. 400
• **Child Education and Social Development** *Janardan Prasad & Vijay Kumari Kaushik*	1996	Rs. 550
• **Education of Handicapped Children : Problems and Solutions** *Janardan Prasad & Ravi Prakash*	1996	Rs. 500
• **Educational Planning and Socio-Economic Equality** *Maitreya Balsara*	1996	Rs. 450